



External Review

Alonzo A. Crim Open Campus High School

Atlanta Public Schools

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External Review

Alonzo A. Crim Open Campus High School

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Introduction to the External Review Process

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards, but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It also includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, observations of the Learning Environment, as well as Required Actions.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. The standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains an evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, conclusions concerning Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards, and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review Team. Indicators are evaluated and rated individually by the External Review Team using a four-level performance rubric. The Standard Performance Level is the average of indicator scores for the standard.

Standard 1: Purpose and Direction

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 own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the institutions' vision that is supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.		3.33	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Minutes from meetings related to development of the school's purpose •Survey results •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Observations •Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the school's purpose •Interviews •Documentation or description of the process for creating the school's purpose including the role of stakeholders •Purpose statements - past and present 	4

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the school's statement of purpose•Interviews•Observations•Survey results•The school's statement of purpose•Accreditation Report	3
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Survey results•The school data profile•Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings•Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders•Interviews•Accreditation Report•The school continuous improvement plan	3

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The school leadership has done an exemplary job of changing the school's culture and promoting a true vision and purpose for student success.

1.1

A review of evidence and artifacts revealed that the staff that has a shared sense of purpose. There now exists a culture exhibiting positive qualities that have teachers and staff members who are willing to take risks and enact reforms, where before there existed a toxic or negative culture of staff unwilling to change and where the tone was oppositional and acerbic, according to stakeholder interviews. The school is no longer a place where negativity dominates conversations, interactions, and planning and where the only stories recounted are of failure. The school's leadership is commended for their tireless efforts during the past three years to counter the public's negative perception of the school.

The transition to a supportive school culture enables the school to become more successful and welcomed by its community.

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

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 school leadership research, Leithwood & 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 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 school communities to attain school 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 school 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 has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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		Standard Performance Level	
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.		3.0	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Student handbooks •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •Staff handbooks •Accreditation Report •Interviews •School handbooks 	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Governing body minutes relating to training•Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest•Assurances, certifications•Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies•Communications about program regulations•Observations•Historical compliance data•Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest•Governing code of ethics	3
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Roles and responsibilities of school leadership•School improvement plan developed by the school•Accreditation Report•Stakeholder input and feedback•Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation•Observations•Agendas and minutes of meetings•Interviews	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of collaboration and shared leadership•Survey results•Observations•Interviews•Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose•Accreditation Report•Examples of decisions in support of the school's continuous improvement plan	3
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Minutes from meetings with stakeholders•Survey responses•Accreditation Report•Observations•Interviews	3
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation•Observations•Job specific criteria•Representative supervision and evaluation reports•Interviews	3

Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning

A high-quality and effective 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 to 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, which include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The school'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 et al, 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 et al, 2008). According to Marks, Louis, & Printy (2002), school staff that engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, & Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective schools, "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 through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that 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.

Standard	Standard Performance Level
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.	3.17

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school'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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Lesson plans•Interviews•Accreditation Report•Posted learning objectives•Course schedules•Course descriptions•Observations	3
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum guides•Observations•Common assessments•Surveys results•Interviews•Accreditation Report•Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps•Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum	3
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Authentic assessments•Interviews•Observations•Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge•Surveys results	2

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books •Supervision and evaluation procedures •Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions •Observations •Surveys results •Interviews •Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs •Accreditation Report 	3
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Common language, protocols and reporting tools •Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees •Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings •Survey results •Observations •Peer coaching guidelines and procedures •Interviews •Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration 	4
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Interviews •Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Accreditation Report •Survey results 	3
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Records of meetings and walk thrus/feedback sessions •Observations •Interviews 	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Survey results•Interviews•Volunteer program with variety of options for participation•List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days•Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress•Accreditation Report•Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process	4
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•List of students matched to adult advocate•Accreditation Report•Survey results•Interviews•Observations•Curriculum and activities of formal adult advocate structure•Master schedule with time for formal adult advocate structure	4
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Observations•Survey results•Sample report cards for each grade level and for all courses•Interviews•Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Survey results•Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs•Accreditation Report•Observations	3
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Interviews•Survey results•List of learning support services and student population served by such services•Accreditation Report•Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning•Data used to identify unique learning needs of students	3

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The administration restructured the school day in order to schedule daily collaborative planning time for all teachers.

3.5

Teacher and administrative interviews confirm that the school leadership has created and supports structures for collaboration by providing time for teachers to meet in study groups from 8:00-9:00 AM daily. During these meetings, teachers discuss and share instructional and discipline strategies, collect and analyze academic, attendance, and discipline data, develop unit plans, review and analyze assessment data, and participate in professional learning.

The provision of time for data disaggregation and teacher collaboration allows teachers to become better informed about student and class performance.

2. The school employs multiple means to communicate with parents and the community.

3.8

The student population comes from all attendance zones in the Atlanta Public Schools and parental and community involvement has been a challenge. Interviews and a review of artifacts revealed that the school has made tremendous strides in bridging this gap. The school employs a Parent Liaison Community Specialist who coordinates parental and community involvement activities and who acts as a conduit between the school and the community. The Parent Liaison has been successful in soliciting the entire Atlanta community's help in changing the school's culture and stakeholder negative perceptions. The school is engaging parents through partnerships with the Atlanta Police Academy, Morehouse College Upward Bound Program, Parent University, and Atlanta Hartsfield Airport. Parents are kept informed about with student progress through call logs, progress reports, auto calls and the marquee in front of the school. The school employs multiple attendance clerks that are in constant communication with parents.

All stakeholder groups are receptive to frequent and regular communication.

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems

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, 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 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staffs 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 to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.		3.14	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •School budgets for the last three years •Survey results •Interviews •Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff •Accreditation Report •Documentation of highly qualified staff 	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources•Survey results•School schedule•Interviews•Alignment of budget with school purpose and direction•Observations•School calendar	3
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Survey results•Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements•Interviews•Accreditation Report•Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures.•System for maintenance requests•Maintenance schedules•Safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes	4
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Accreditation Report•Survey results•Observations•Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure •Assessments to inform development of technology plan •Survey results 	3
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support •Survey results •Accreditation Report •Interviews •Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education •List of support services available to students •Observations 	3
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning •Accreditation Report •Survey results •Description of IEP process 	3

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.

4.3

School leaders facilitate the development and implementation of policies, practices, and procedures that ensure a safe and orderly learning environment for students and staff. Teacher, student, and parent interviews as well as Review Team observations confirm that the physical plant is well-maintained, extremely clean, and safe. All stakeholders expressed their satisfaction with the execution of daily safety procedures throughout the campus. All students enter the building through one designated door equipped with a metal detector and is staffed by a security guard at all times.

A well-maintained and clean and safe school climate positively affects student and staff perceptions of the learning environment. Clean, safe schools enhance the overall teaching and learning process in that school.

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Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Systems with strong improvement processes are moving beyond anxiety about the current reality and focusing on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, that is, data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, & 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 et al., 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 school 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).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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		Standard Performance Level	
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.		3.0	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols •Observations •Survey results •Interviews •Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance 	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Interviews •Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning •Observations •List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning •Accreditation Report 	3
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Interviews •Survey results •Observations •Accreditation Report 	3
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Student surveys •Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data •Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning •Accreditation Report •Evidence of student growth •Observations •Evidence of student success at the next level •Interviews 	3
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Survey results •Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals •Accreditation Report •Interviews 	3

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Learning Environment

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. External review team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a 4 point scale with 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 7 learning environments included in ELEOT.

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool

<i>Environments</i>	<i>Level</i>
A. Equitable Learning Environment	2.4000000953674316
B. High Expectations Environment	2.4000000953674316
C. Supportive Learning Environment	2.799999952316284
D. Active Learning Environment	2.799999952316284
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	2.4000000953674316
F. Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.0
G. Digital Learning Environment	1.7999999523162842

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

An External Review Team (ERT) representing the SACS CASI Georgia State Office (SACS-CASI-GA), a division of AdvancED, visited Crim Open Campus High School in Atlanta, GA on 2/26/13-2/28/13. During the review, members of the ERT interviewed 2 members of the administrative team, 9 students, 15 parents and community members, and 36 teachers. In addition, the media specialist, counselors, curriculum specialist coaches, and parent liaison were interviewed. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the school.

Specifically, the team examined the school's systems and processes in relation to the 5 AdvancED Standards. Prior to the external review, the team examined the school's Self Assessment, Executive Summary, Student Performance Diagnostic, and the Stakeholder Survey Diagnostic.

Interviews revealed that In 2005, the Atlanta Public Schools opened Alonzo A. Crim Open Campus High School (formerly Alonzo A. Crim Comprehensive School.) The school was designed to serve as an alternative educational program for students who for various reasons were not successful in more traditional school settings. Students who attend the school come from 11 high school zones all across the district. While some choose Crim because of the unique services it offers such as child care, extended hours, and flexible scheduling, most of the student population is made up of students who are sent to the school due to chronic absenteeism, severe behavior problems, and/or repeated academic failure. While the many challenges these students face present unique challenges for the faculty and administrative staff the school and the district are committed to providing an educational program that effectively prepares these young people for post-secondary options whether in the world of work, higher education, or military service.

Due to the AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) status carryover from Crim Comprehensive High School, by 2010, the current campus was considered an 11th year Needs Improvement (NI) school. The school and district personnel applied for and were awarded 3.2 million dollars through the School Improvement Grant (SIG) that became effective during Fall 2010. Being awarded this grant required a transformation of the school. The demographics therefore changed over the last three years. The school, prior to the SIG grant, was an enrollment and withdrawal revolving door. The AJC (Atlanta Journal Constitution) featured the school several times in a negative light as a school "where students came to quit school." The surrounding community shared the negative perception of Crim, as students who skipped school committed crimes within the community. In order to survive, this school had to begin a complete culture change. The ERT applauds the school for their efforts to make this change a reality.

A focus team comprised of administrators, teachers, students, and community members met numerous times throughout the spring and summer and solicited input from all stakeholders in their Self Assessment

process. Interviews confirmed that the Standards Self Assessment was generated from a stakeholder approach reflecting desire to change and maintain an alternative school with a mission that provides a safe, nurturing atmosphere in which to guide an impoverished at-risk student body through a standards-based classroom curriculum with character enrichment.

The school's profile was also examined by the Review Team and was found to comprehensively represent the school, its students, and the school community. The school has initiated a plethora of demographic and student achievement data for use in continuous improvement planning. Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the school met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

Interviews, classroom observations, and reviews of artifacts revealed a number of Powerful Practices being employed by the school as well as opportunities for the school to better serve its students. Stakeholder interviews and observations indicated that the staff has a shared sense of purpose. There are underlying norms of collegiality, improvement, and hard work. The school schedules rituals and traditions that celebrate student accomplishment, teacher innovation, and community commitment. Additionally, the school now has a positive school culture and a shared sense of what is important. A shared ethos of caring and concern and a shared commitment to helping students learn was evident. There now exists a culture exhibiting positive qualities that have teachers and staff members who are willing to take risks and enact reforms where before there existed a toxic or negative culture of staff unwilling to change and where the tone was oppositional and acerbic. The school is no longer a place where negativity dominates conversations, interactions, and planning and where the only stories recounted are of failure. The school's leadership is commended for their tireless efforts over the past three years to counter the public negative perception of the school.

A common organizing framework for instruction in all classrooms informs the teaching and learning process. The school is commended for designing and using a variety of academic support structures to meet the instructional needs of students who are identified as at-risk of not meeting standards and/or not passing EOCT's (End of Course Test). Examples include Saturday School (a day set aside for remediation), Read 180 (an accelerated reading program), front loading 9th grade students into a 9th Grade Academy, daily before and after school teacher tutorials, and a Summer Boot Camp.

Teacher and administrative interviews confirm that the school leadership has created and supports structures for collaboration by providing time every day from 8:00-9:00 for teachers to meet in study groups, in data teams and as content teams. The culture of classrooms reflects a consistently supportive and risk-free learning environment, as evidenced in 96% of classrooms observed. The administration restructured the school day in order to schedule daily collaborative planning time for all teachers. During these meetings, teachers discuss and share instructional and discipline strategies, collect and analyze academic, attendance, and discipline data, develop unit plans, review and analyze assessment data, and participate in professional learning.

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The school utilizes various means to communicate with parents and the community. Examples include an extremely active Parent Liaison and Community Specialist, multiple attendance clerks, report cards, progress reports, website, school newsletters, home visits, and telephone calls.

Crim maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff. School leaders facilitate the development and implementation of policies, practices, and procedures that ensure a safe and orderly learning environment for students and staff. Teacher, student, and parent interviews as well as Review Team observations confirm that the physical plant is well-maintained, extremely clean, and safe. All stakeholders expressed their satisfaction with the execution of daily safety procedures throughout the campus. All students enter the building through one designated door that is equipped with a metal detector and that is monitored by a security guard at all times.

Interviews, classroom observations, and artifact review revealed opportunities for the school to better serve its students.

The administration should clearly define and expand the roles of staff to maximize and to more effectively use human resources such as co-teachers, school counselors, instructional coaches, and attendance clerks. Interviews with teachers, other instructional staff, and with students revealed that there is a need to re-examine the roles of certain staff members to better maximize their skills in helping close the achievement gap that is present in the school's data.

During observations, the Review Team observed very little co-teaching occurring. Data indicate a below average passing rate of students with disabilities. Students interviewed expressed their frustration of the non-availability of the counseling staff. They expressed their desire to be able to talk with a counselor on a more frequent basis about their academics and post-secondary pursuits.

The school employs numerous attendance clerks, but the school still suffers from a high rate of non-attendance. A review of the attendance data displayed in the Data Room was incomplete and not current. The ERT suggests that the Instructional coaches more deeply use walk through data to ensure that teachers are re-teaching areas where data shows poor student performance.

Another concern is the lack of rigor. Teachers have received professional development on quadrant four type questions (rigor), so coaches should be monitoring more closely to see its impact on change in teacher behaviors and impact on student achievement. Also, coaches should continue to work on differentiated instruction because this continues to be a concern. More should be accomplished because of the low pupil:teacher ratio.

Provide additional professional learning in integrating modern technology into daily instruction more effectively. During classroom observations, the Review Team observed teachers effectively integrating technology into the lesson in only 48% of the classrooms visited. The school staff will benefit from additional professional learning on integrating modern technology into the curriculum as an effective tool to support conceptual understanding of content, increase student engagement, reinforce high-order thinking skills, increase opportunities for differentiation of instruction, collect formative assessment data, and reinforce students' ability to investigate and analyze information. Research indicates that when

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students use technology as a tool or a support for communicating with others, they are more likely to be actively thinking about information, making choices, and executing skills than is in teacher-led lessons.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

During the on-site review, the ERTeam evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the school. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

The External Review Team observed in 50 classrooms. The team found that instructional materials and resources are effectively allocated and that classroom management is conducive to student learning. Instruction is provided in a safe and orderly environment. Instructional time is maximized and the culture of the classrooms reflects a risk-free learning environment. An instructional framework is posted in all classrooms with an opening, work session, and closing.

However, classroom observations revealed that research-based instructional strategies are not consistently and pervasively implemented. Observations and teacher surveys revealed that teachers perceive they are using a variety of research-based instructional strategies. However, classroom observations data indicates emerging to operational implementation of standards-based instructional strategies used to meet the instructional needs of students. Ensuring that research-based practices are consistently and pervasively implemented will promote active student engagement and significantly impact student achievement. Teachers' surveys stated that they emphasize and encourage learners to use higher-order thinking skills. However, student work products, classroom discussions, and teacher questioning do not routinely reflect higher order thinking skills specifically related to the elements of the standards. Classroom observations showed that higher-order thinking skills and processes were used by teachers during instruction in 76% of the classroom visited and evident in student work in only 58% of classes. The Review Team also noted that questions referenced during instruction were frequently at the recall level. Classroom observations indicates that there still exists a need for all staff to ensure high expectations for all students by increasing teacher use of higher order thinking questioning techniques and performance tasks that are aligned to the CCGPS (Common Core Georgia Performance Standards).

Observations also revealed a need for increased rigor in all classes and for teachers to use more flexible grouping strategies, differentiated instruction, better alignment of student interventions to support identified needs and increased student use of the abundance of 21st Century technology that is available throughout the school.

The ERT found Crim Open Campus High School to be a quality school led by a skilled, dedicated, and talented professional staff, involved State and Federal support staff, and a supportive community that

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collectively encourages and supports student success. It is evident throughout the school that instructional improvement that results in improving student achievement is the highest priority. The school does indeed have many challenges ahead, but with the administration's leadership and diligence of the faculty, improvements are being made incrementally.

The Review Team certifies that the school has satisfactorily met the requirements of an AdvancED Accreditation External Review and certifies that the school meets all the standards for re-accreditation. Consequently, the Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that Crim Open Campus High School be awarded Accreditation.

The External Review Team expresses appreciation to the professional staff, members of the Board of Education, parents, and other community representatives for their hospitality extended during the visit. The ERT challenges the professional staff and the Board of Education to receive and study this report and through consensus, act on the recommendations in order to improve and enhance the quality and capacity of the school to improve student learning. Additionally, the team wishes the school system and its students much success in pursuit of student achievement through the continuous process of educational improvement.

Required Actions

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the impact of all professional learning.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
3.11

Interviews, observations, staff surveys, and student achievement data revealed that even though the school has offered an abundance of Professional Learning, there still exists a disconnect between the professional learning on changes in teacher knowledge, skills, and practices and on student learning. The Review Team suggests that the school revisit professional learning opportunities in differentiating instruction, higher order thinking skills and the Quadrant D level rigor.

Frequent monitoring of instruction and the provision of feedback to teachers will better inform the administration about the impact of professional learning. Additionally, the implementation of a comprehensive plan for ongoing monitoring will ensure that all professional learning supports the sustained development of teachers' deep understanding of content knowledge and research-based instructional strategies.

2. Establish high expectations for all students through the delivery of a rigorous curriculum and the use of multiple student achievement indicators to regularly monitor and adjust instructional practices.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
3.1

Classroom observations, teacher interviews, and a review of lesson plans indicates that there still exists a need for all staff to ensure high expectations for all students by increasing teacher use of higher order thinking questioning techniques and performance tasks that are aligned to the CCGPS (Common Core Georgia Performance Standards).

Students will benefit by increased rigor in all classes, more flexible grouping strategies, differentiated instruction, better alignment of student interventions to support identified needs, and an increase in student use of the abundance of 21st Century technology that is available throughout the school.

The utilization of all data and its disaggregation will better inform the school of both areas of strength and areas needing improvement.

3. Ensure that research-based instructional strategies are consistently and pervasively implemented.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
3.3

Observations and interviews revealed that teachers perceive that they are using a variety of research-based instructional strategies. However, classroom observations data indicate emerging to operational implementation of standards-based instructional strategies used to meet the instructional needs of students. Teachers who were interviewed stated that they emphasize and encourage learners to use higher-order thinking skills. However, student work products, classroom discussions, and teacher questioning do not routinely reflect higher order thinking skills specifically related to the elements of the standards. Classroom observations showed that higher-order thinking skills and processes were used by teachers during instruction in 76% of the classroom visited and evident in student work in only 58% of classrooms. The External Review Team noted that questions referenced during instruction were frequently at the recall level.

Ensuring that research-based practices are consistently and pervasively implemented will promote active student engagement and significantly impact student achievement.

Addenda

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the Team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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, along with 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 (founded 1917) joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students. The Northwest Accreditation Commission joined the AdvancED network in 2011.

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Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

Report of the
External Review
for
Benjamin Elijah Mays High School

3450 Benjamin E. Mays Drive
Atlanta, GA, 30331-1999
US

Mr. Richard Fowler, Principal

Date: February 19, 2014 - February 20, 2014



North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

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Introduction to the External Review

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of student performance or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, as well as evaluations of Student Performance, the Learning Environment, Stakeholder Feedback and Assurances.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. Before implementation, the standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains a detailed evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, identification of Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards (if appropriate), and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review team.

The AdvancED Standards and Indicators are the first of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Using indicator-specific performance levels, the External Review Team evaluates the degree to which the institution meets each indicator on a scale of 1 to 4. The scores assigned to the indicators are averaged to arrive at a single score. This score, along with scores from evaluations of student performance and stakeholder feedback, will be used to determine the accreditation status of the institution.

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	2.91
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Standard 1: The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and 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 30,000 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.

Standard 1			
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) • Interviews • Documentation or description of the process for creating the school's purpose including the role of stakeholders • Purpose statements - past and present 	2.0
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • The school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report 	3.0
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings • Interviews • Accreditation Report • The school continuous improvement plan 	3.0

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Involve parents and other stakeholders in the development of the vision, mission, and core beliefs of the school so that they will have understanding of and commitment to the purpose and direction of the school.

1.1

While the school leadership explained that parents had been involved in the review and revision of the school purpose statement, parents and community members who were interviewed stated that they had not been involved in this process nor did they have a clear understanding of the purpose statement. Teachers who were interviewed said that they had not been involved in the process nor had they been part of a faculty group that approved the statement.

Stakeholder knowledge of the purpose and direction and their involvement in the revision process is important in ensuring that all understand and work together to promote the purpose of the school.

Standard 2: The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 2			
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student handbooks • Governing body policies, procedures, and practices • Staff handbooks • Accreditation Report • Interviews • School handbooks 	3.0
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Assurances, certifications • Interviews • Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest • Governing code of ethics 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School improvement plan developed by the school • Accreditation Report • Survey results regarding functions of the governing body • Interviews 	2.0
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Observations • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	3.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys • Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	2.0
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation • Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation • Job specific criteria • Representative supervision and evaluation reports • Interviews 	3.0

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Communicate with and involve all stakeholder groups (parents, teachers, and community members) in making decisions that directly impact the school's purpose and direction, specifically the school improvement efforts.

2.5

Parents, teachers, and community members who were interviewed stated that they had not been involved in reviewing or revising the purpose statement. The involvement of these groups enable them to share the information with other stakeholders and provide support for the decisions in order to build understanding and commitment to the purpose.

Stakeholders should have opportunities to collaborate with the leadership team and staff members when reviewing the mission, beliefs, and goals of the school.

2. Support, protect, and respect the authority of the school leadership in meeting the goals for achievement and instruction by allowing the school administration to manage the day-to-day operations of the school.

2.3

Information gleaned from stakeholder interviews substantiated reports from the school that the governing board sometimes attempts to micromanage the decision-making process in matters such as the selection of school personnel. In these instances, the school leadership is unable to act in the best interest of the school in serving its purpose and direction.

Schools are more effective when the school leadership is empowered to manage the school and the governing board acts in a supportive role.

Standard 3: The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student 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 to 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.

Standard 3			
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school'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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson plans • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Learning expectations for different courses • Posted learning objectives • Course schedules • Course descriptions • Observations • Descriptions of instructional techniques 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum guides • A description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment • Observations • Common assessments • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	4.0
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher evaluation criteria • Professional development focused on these strategies • Authentic assessments • Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource • Interviews • Observations • Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool • Accreditation Report 	3.0
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process • Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs • Accreditation Report 	3.0
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Common language, protocols and reporting tools • Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees • Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings • Survey results • Observations • Interviews • Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance • Accreditation Report • Survey results 	2.0
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	3.0
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Interviews • Volunteer program with variety of options for participation • Accreditation Report 	3.0
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Description of formal adult advocate structures 	4.0
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews • Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting 	2.0
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs • Accreditation Report • Crosswalk between professional learning and school purpose and direction 	3.0
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • List of learning support services and student population served by such services • Accreditation Report • Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning 	2.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. Teachers participate both formally and informally on interdisciplinary teams, content collaboration teams, data teams, and school improvement teams to improve instruction and student learning.

3.5

Observations and interviews showed that the leadership team has initiated practices that promote the interaction and collaboration of staff members in a variety of team activities for the purpose of sharing ideas and planning for instruction. School team activities included the review and interpretation of data collected from multiple sources and the review and revision of curriculum and instructional plans within and across disciplines. Such efforts have resulted in a cohesive instructional team that spans the five small learning communities, ensures that equity in instruction is provided for all students, and ensures that all students feel valued and a part of the school family.

Collaborative learning communities have proven effective in promoting student learning.

2. Students are connected to and well-known by at least one staff member who supports the student's educational experience.

3.9

A review of the school's accreditation report, stakeholder interviews, and observations indicated that the school has a strong support system that includes caring teachers, counselors, a social worker, and academy leaders who are assigned to each of the small learning communities. These staff members work to ensure that every student is known and supported in the educational experience. In addition, the principal and three assistant principals work diligently to build a personal relationship with each student. One student aptly described the school as a "family" where every student is known and accepted. School leadership is readily accessible to students and the principal has an open door policy that allows students the opportunity to meet with him to discuss concerns.

Having an advocate allows students to feel better connected. and supported by the school.

3. Teachers, administrators, and support staff consistently collaborate to adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment in response to data and the process in which data are disaggregated and reviewed is systemic.

3.2

Interviews with stakeholder groups revealed that the instructional and support staff are supported by the school leadership in their collaborative efforts to utilize the rich data sources to make needed adjustments in curriculum, instruction, and their assessments. Test results and instructional observations are carefully studied and analyzed, and adjustments are often made on a day-to-day basis so that students understand expectations and are able to meet them.

Effective schools are characterized by their having systemic processes to review data in order to make informed instructional decisions.

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Evaluate the current grading and reporting practices to ensure categories and weights are valid and beneficial for all courses. | 3.10 |
| | <p>The school has adopted school-wide grading weights to provide clear grading practices and a fair representation of student performance. In a review of evidence provided and discussions with teachers in interviews, it was not clear if this practice has been fully institutionalized. In order to ensure that there is consistency in grading practices, the school must review the procedure and fully implement it.</p> <p>This effort will allow students to see their progress as grades are posted and determine if they have met established standards.</p> | |
| 2. | Utilize exemplars to guide and inform students as they work to meet and exceed standards. | 3.6 |
| | <p>As team members observed the work of students and teachers and as they visited classrooms and work areas, they did not see exemplars being used in instruction nor did they see evidence of them in classrooms. Exemplars can be powerful instructional tools that demonstrate acceptable levels of performance and the standard expectation of teachers.</p> <p>Adding this resource for students would be helpful in strengthening instructional approaches.</p> | |
| 3. | Ensure that a plan for individualized differentiated instruction is developed and implemented systematically in an effort to maximize student growth and achievement. | 3.3 |
| | <p>A review of the school's professional learning plan for staff reveals the multiple opportunities that have been provided for training in differentiation of instruction. It was not obvious in the classroom observations that strategies were being used to personalize and differentiate instruction for students in need.</p> <p>With noted lags in the achievement of specific subgroups, it is important that differentiated strategies are utilized consistently to meet the needs of students and to impact their levels of achievement.</p> | |
| 4. | Develop and implement a systematic Response to Intervention program that addresses the learning needs of all students. | 3.12 |
| | <p>Students at the high school level may need additional assistance in meeting academic standards in the basic content areas. In interviews, leadership staff and teachers mentioned some efforts which are in place to remediate and provide additional assistance to students in need. It was not apparent that there is a systematic plan in place to provide tiers of intervention. A systematic approach to providing interventions would assist staff to establish specific interventions and to determine when students should be placed in a different intervention program that would be more appropriate and acceptable in meeting their needs. Such an approach is critical for those subgroups who are experiencing gaps in achievement, especially those not identified for service in special education.</p> | |

Standard 4: The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

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 30,000 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. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Assessments of staffing needs • Documentation of highly qualified staff 	3.0
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • School schedule • Interviews • Alignment of budget with school purpose and direction 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures. • Maintenance schedules 	3.0
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Observations • Data on media and information resources available to students and staff 	3.0
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure • Policies relative to technology use 	3.0
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education • List of support services available to students • Observations 	3.0
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Accreditation Report • Description of IEP process • Description of referral process 	4.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The school has a strong counseling and support services program to support student needs, especially in the areas of college readiness, acceleration, and intervention.

4.7

A review of documents and interviews with students and staff revealed that the school utilizes its wealth of support services to identify and serve students who are preparing for the next level of programming after high school. College preparatory and Advanced Placement classes are available to students in each of the five small learning communities/academies and students who meet the criteria for accelerated programs are readily placed into those classes. There are also opportunities for students to take summer classes so that they can advance to the accelerated programs. Each small learning community/academy has its own counselor and program leaders as well as the shared services of a school social worker, all of whom work collaboratively to ensure that students are placed in classes where they can be appropriately challenged. The collaborative efforts of these staff members result in student needs being met and their being ready to successfully advance to the next level of their educational program.

The provision of support services allows students to better achieve their maximum potential.

Standard 5: The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Systems 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.

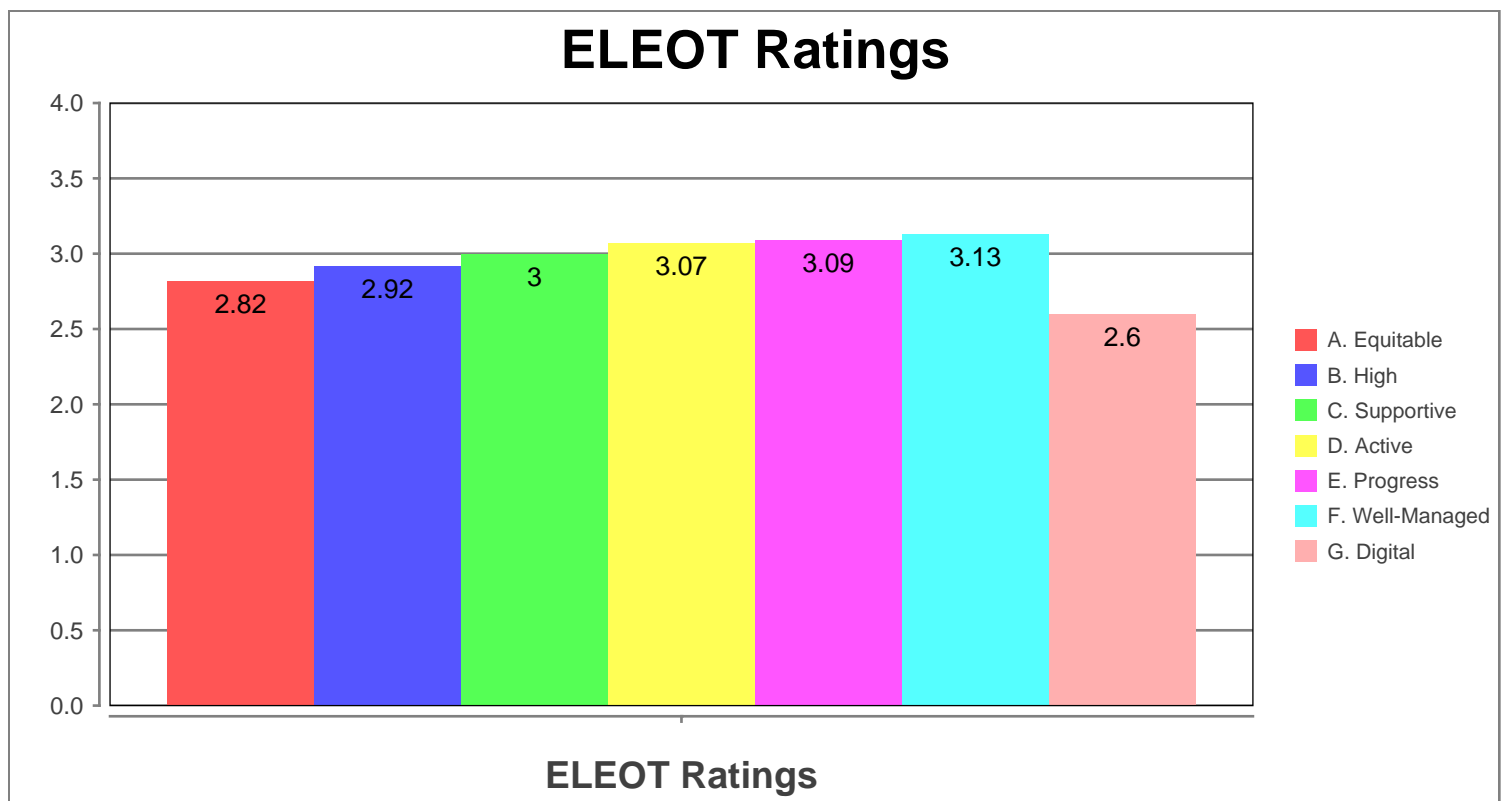
Standard 5			
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols • Observations • Interviews • Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance • Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning • Accreditation Report 	3.0
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies specific to data training • Interviews • Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data • Observations • Accreditation Report 	3.0
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning • Accreditation Report • Evidence of student growth • Interviews 	3.0
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	2.0

Learning Environment

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. External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.



Student Performance

Student Performance on assessments is the second of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze student performance data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the assessments used by the institution, the degree to which the institution properly administered the assessments, analyzed and acted on the results, and the overall performance of students using a set of rubrics. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Student Performance Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Assessment Quality	3.0
Test Administration	3.0
Quality of Learning	3.0
Equity of Learning	2.0

Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys are directly correlated to the AdvancED Accreditation 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 and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Stakeholder Feedback Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Questionnaire Administration	3.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.0

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

Benjamin Elijah Mays High School is a secondary school program in Atlanta, Georgia, and is part of the Atlanta Public School System. The school serves students in grades 9-12 through five small learning communities/academies. The learning communities are in the areas of Science and Mathematics, Business and Entrepreneurship, Mass Communications, and two gender-specific programs that focus on preparing students for entry in the business world. In addition, the school has global offerings that include JROTC (Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps), fine arts, SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) preparation, and physical education. In addition to the school principal, three assistant principals, and a school social worker, the school has a small learning community leader for each of the five academies. In each small learning community/academy, there is a counselor and Advanced Placement teachers who provide instruction and support for all students. The school has benefited from a \$49 million Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) that provided a state-of-the-art facility with a sophisticated technology and media center. Each classroom has advanced technological teaching tools that can be accessed by staff and students to provide rich, hands-on instructional experiences.

The External Review Team visited the school on February 18-20, 2014. The visit began on the night of the team's arrival with a meeting with the school's AdvancED leadership team (including Standards leaders and team members, school leaders, and students) and a tour of the school facility. The school also provided the team a meal and an opportunity to talk with leaders of the academy.

The school prepared files of evidence to support each of the five Standards and this information was presented to each team member on a portable storage drive. Members of the staff led work on each of the five Standards and rated each of the Indicators. Staff members reported in interviews that the reports had not been approved by the staff and some staff members shared that they had no knowledge of the ratings or how they had been reached. The team carefully reviewed and rated the Indicators on three occasions during the visit. The team engaged in dialogue and deliberations as they reached consensus regarding the degree to which the school had met the AdvancED Standards and Indicators.

During the visit, the team interviewed a total of 76 individuals. In this group, there were 8 administrators, 37 teachers, 10 support staff, 9 students, and 12 parents. A variety of staff members and students presented information in the evening session on February 18 and in the interview sessions.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

The school was found to have an effective, systematic, and comprehensive process to promote the purpose and direction of the school. This was evidenced by a high commitment to the core evolution of the teaching and learning processes, including the implementation of the small learning communities and the ongoing effective

instructional assessments. Providing college readiness support in the program is present to provide viable support to students as they plan for post-high school experiences. Missing was a plan to involve stakeholder groups, especially parents in the review and revision of the school purpose statement and the plans for school improvement. Parents expressed a sincere commitment to the school's work and a desire to be more involved in those areas in which they can make meaningful contributions. A parent liaison has been employed using federal funds and parent presence on campus has significantly increased through the work to involve them in volunteer activities and informational sessions regarding their students.

The school follows the established policies of the school district and governing board. Moreover, the governing board functions as a cohesive unit effectively in their designated roles and responsibilities. However, in interviews with the school administration, it was revealed that the governing board does not always ensure the school leadership has the autonomy to manage day-to-day operations effectively. The school leadership must be empowered to meet goals for achievement while the governing board offers support and resources as needed. School leaders consistently align decisions and actions to achieve the school's purpose and goals.

In classroom observations, it was seen that most teachers expect all students to be held to high standards, although parents perceive that the level of those Standards is not always equitable across the five small learning communities. In an effort to engage stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction, school leaders must communicate with students, teachers, parents, and community members and involve those stakeholders in the development, review, and revision of the school's efforts. The evaluation processes of leadership and staff, in review of student achievement and professional development, has led to improved professional practice and student success.

The resources and support systems in place are responsive and effective to meet the needs of the school. Policies and practices are clearly defined, but they are not always clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Instructional time is supported and the fiscal resources are directly related to the instructional needs of the students, such as quantity of teachers, material resources, remediation, and acceleration support. Media and technology resources are adequate to support the learning standards and goals of the school. The technology infrastructure is abundantly viable to promote achievement and engagement of student learning goals and their assessments.

Safety/emergency resources and protocols are evident and present to appropriately nurture and provide a healthy learning environment. Discussion of how to creatively support the counseling and support programs is needed to solicit additional support to the non-academic concerns that may affect the academic preparation and readiness for success.

Programs are strong and effective, but consideration should be given to implementing assessment of academic programs and student clubs/activities to measure the effectiveness and viability along with the awareness of strengths and areas of improvement.

The school has a comprehensive assessment system that features multiple locally-developed and standardized assessments. Data teams composed of teachers collect and analyze data and report results to parents in conferences that are held on a regularly-scheduled basis. Teachers reported in interviews that all staff has been trained in acceptable practices for collecting, analyzing, and applying information from the data sources. As new employees are hired, teachers redeliver the training so that all are current in the knowledge of how to utilize data.

Furthermore, the data are used as a basis for making instructional decisions and in developing the school improvement plan. Likewise, the data are used to evaluate progress being made on the improvement plan. The utilization of the information provided by the data provides a firm foundation for determining students' successes and areas of continuing need as well as the readiness of students to advance to higher levels of instruction.

Interviews with the leadership team and the administrative team provided information that parents and staff members had been involved in the development of the accreditation report, revision of the purpose statement, and the ongoing continuous improvement process. However, when parents were questioned about their role in these processes, they shared that they had not given input to the preparation of the Self Assessment, nor were they involved in reviewing the purpose statement. They expressed concern about their perception that there is a lack of equity in the implementation of the small learning community approach. They also expressed that the communication between the home and school is fragmented and that there is a need for a unified approach for communication. In other interviews, teachers shared that they had not been involved in the development of or the general approval of the school improvement plan.

Approximately 50% of the parents in the interview sessions posited that there is a perceived attitude among students that they will not be successful unless they are members of the Science and Mathematics small learning community. This perception comes from the fact that this is the only academy where students receive accelerated mathematics instruction. Administrators stated there are legitimate reasons for this occurring, which includes the state-required sequence for mathematics offerings. They also stated that there is a process whereby students in other academies may qualify for eligibility for that course sequence. This is not understood by all parents and it must be communicated so that all students feel valued and worthy. Additionally, it must be communicated clearly so the parent perception that there is a lack of equity in the programming is eliminated. It is essential that the work begin to dispel the current perception that has become the reality for some parents. Observation of the programs offered in the other small learning communities demonstrate their value in meeting career goals for students.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

Members of the External Review Team visited a total of twenty (20) classrooms. Students were engaged in instruction with teachers providing meaningful learning activities. In many classrooms, students were involved in hands-on activities, sometimes in small groups and sometimes working individually a times. Teachers were using the available electronic boards and computers in presenting students; however, there was generally an absence of utilization of the technology to its potential. For example, the electronic boards were used to project a worksheet in much the same way that an overhead projector would be used, but they were not used to the fullest extent that they could be used. In all settings, students were generally found to be respectful and knowledgeable of the classroom rules and procedures and were compliant.

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 an institution relative to the criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED is introducing a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student

success, AdvancED introduces an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; 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.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and Indicators; the Analysis of Student Performance; and the Engagement and Involvement of Stakeholders. Within each domain institutions will be able to 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 can be a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Required Action as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected Indicator.

The IEQ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. Your institution's IEQ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Your actions for improvement that have a positive impact will be reflected in your IEQ score.

IEQ Institutional Score: 290

Teaching and Learning Impact: 290
(Standards 3 and 5, Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 273
(Standards 1 and 2, Stakeholder Feedback Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 314
(Standard 4)

The External Review Team recommends that Benjamin Elijah Mays High School be accredited by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission for a five-year term of accreditation.

Improvement Priority

1. Communicate comprehensive information about student achievement, school improvement goals, and the operation of the small learning communities (academies) to all groups of stakeholders (parents, student, teachers, and community members) using multiple delivery methods.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

5.5 Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.

Description:

Interviews with parents and teachers revealed that they had not been involved in the development of the accreditation report, the school improvement plan, or the review of the school purpose. Their knowledge and understanding of this work and the direction of the school with regard to school improvement was limited. Parents reported that they did not understand how the small learning communities operate and that they had inaccurate perceptions of how the academies operate and how placement in accelerated programs occurs. This lack of understanding has created a perception of inequity among programs and the students who are served. During interviews, school leaders explained that the legitimate reasons why the programs are operated as they are and how this is necessary to meet state curriculum guidelines. However, leaders must effectively communicate the practices and procedures in order to eliminate the inaccurate conceptions.

This is necessary in order for students to feel valued and worthy and to avoid unhealthy attitudes among students and parents.

Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:

Dr. Judy C Forbes

Team Member:

Mr. Charlie Bryant

Mr. Jason Dean Lemley

Dr. Maury I Wills

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. 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 complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that confers accreditation upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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 joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, these divisions share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

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External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Atlanta Public Schools

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Date: April 23, 2013 - April 24, 2013

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Introduction to the External Review Process

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards, but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It also includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, observations of the Learning Environment, as well as Required Actions.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. The standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains an evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, conclusions concerning Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards, and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review Team. Indicators are evaluated and rated individually by the External Review Team using a four-level performance rubric. The Standard Performance Level is the average of indicator scores for the standard.

Standard 1: Purpose and Direction

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 own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the institutions' vision that is supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Standard		Standard Performance Level
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.		3.0
Indicator	Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	<p>The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Survey results •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Observations •Interviews •Documentation or description of the process for creating the school's purpose including the role of stakeholders •Purpose statements - past and present •Test Score Report 2011-12; By-Laws; Student Handbook 	3

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the school's statement of purpose•Interviews•Observations•Survey results•The school's statement of purpose•Accreditation Report•Communication Documents and Pamphlets with Information about Culture/Values	3
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Survey results•The school data profile•Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings•Interviews•Accreditation Report•The school continuous improvement plan•Title I Plan; Parent Involvement Plan Collaborative Meeting Template	3

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

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 school leadership research, Leithwood & 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 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 school communities to attain school 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 school 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 has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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	Standard Performance Level
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.	2.83

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Student handbooks•Governing body policies, procedures, and practices•Staff handbooks•Accreditation Report•Interviews•Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions•School handbooks•By-Laws; Agendas for Leadership and FacultyLeadership Team Meeting Minutes	3
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Governing body minutes relating to training•Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest•List of assigned staff for compliance•Assurances, certifications•Interviews•Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies•Communications about program regulations•Observations•Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest•Governing code of ethics•Title I Plan	3

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Roles and responsibilities of school leadership•School improvement plan developed by the school•Accreditation Report•Stakeholder input and feedback•Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation•Survey results regarding functions of the governing body•Observations•Agendas and minutes of meetings•Interviews	3
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Observations•Interviews•Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose•Accreditation Report•Examples of decisions in support of the school's continuous improvement plan•Teacher Keys Evaluation System GuidelinesPD 360 School-wide Usage ReportTeacher Observation and Conference Schedule	2

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Minutes from meetings with stakeholders •Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys •Survey responses •Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan •Accreditation Report •Observations •Interviews •Agendas of Administrative and Leadership Meetings •Newsletters to Staff •Agendas of Parent Meetings •Teacher Keys Evaluation System Guidelines 	3
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation •Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice and student success noted •Observations •Job specific criteria •Representative supervision and evaluation reports •Interviews •Professional Learning Records •Teacher Keys Evaluation System Guidelines •PD 360 School-wide Usage Report •Teacher Observation and Conference Schedule •Professional Development Plan •Personnel Handbook 	3

Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning

A high-quality and effective 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 to 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, which include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The school'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 et al, 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 et al, 2008). According to Marks, Louis, & Printy (2002), school staff that engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, & Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective schools, "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 through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that 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.

Standard	Standard Performance Level
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.	2.42

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school'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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Interviews•Accreditation Report•Posted learning objectives•Course schedules•Observations•Descriptions of instructional techniques•- Lesson Plan Templates<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Observed learning objectives, expectations and student work samples posted on classroom walls and hall bulletin boards- 9th English Lang. Arts (ELA) Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS)- Data Analysis Process explanation document- Sample of completed lesson plan with administrator's response comments/questions confirms monitoring instructional strategies;- Limited differentiation methods in some classrooms	2

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Curriculum guides •Observations •Interviews •Curriculum writing process •Accreditation Report •Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps •Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum •- Curriculum Calendar - EOCT Content Weights - Teacher Mid-Year Conference report - Data Discussion Log - BEST Data Notebook: Individual Item Analysis Summary, Skill Gap Analysis - Benchmark Assessment Development Agenda - Fall Data Retreat Agenda - Class Proficiency Report - Exam Item Analysis Report - Mid-year conference reports indicates EOCT/non-EOCT course, student average research based strategies for remediation plan, 	3
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Teacher evaluation criteria •Agenda items addressing these strategies •Interviews •Observations •Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge •Findings from supervisor walk-thrus and observations •Surveys results •Accreditation Report •- Redelivery of Mulligan Professional Development sign-in log - Kagan Cooperative Learning Strategies 	2

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum maps•Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books•Supervision and evaluation procedures•Observations•Surveys results•Interviews•Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs•Accreditation Report•- Classroom Instructional Non-negotiables- Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES) Administrative Observation Schedule- Corrective Action Memo; Items of Concern are listed to be checked- Sample of completed lesson plan with administrator's response comments/questions confirms monitoring instructional strategies	2
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Common language, protocols and reporting tools•Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees•Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings•Survey results•Observations•Interviews•Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration•Collaborative Meeting Minutes Collaborative Meeting Template (Administrative)	2

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Interviews •Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Accreditation Report •Survey results •Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction •- Apple Ipad student check-out log - Student Grading Weights - Teacher Mid-Year Conference report - BEST Data Notebook: Individual Item Analysis Summary, Skill Gap Analysis - Benchmark Assessment Development Agenda - Fall Data Retreat Agenda - Class Proficiency Report - Exam Item Analysis Report - Mid-year conference reports indicates EOCT/non-EOCT course, student average research based strategies for remediation plan, differentiation strategie 	3
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Survey results •Interviews 	2
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Survey results •Interviews •List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days •Accreditation Report •Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process •Georgia Tech Tutorial Printed Information and Notices Tutorial Schedule Schedule for Intervention Class Period Family Involvement Plan (Title I) 	3

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •List of students matched to adult advocate •Accreditation Report •Survey results •Interviews •Observations •Master schedule with time for formal adult advocate structure •Description of formal adult advocate structures 	3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Observations •Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices •Survey results •Sample report cards for each grade level and for all courses •Interviews •Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting •Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting •Student Handbook Bulletin Board Information Postings 	3
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Interviews •Survey results •Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs •Accreditation Report •Observations •Teacher Keys Evaluation System Guidelines PD 360 School-wide Usage Report Teacher Observation and Conference Schedule Professional Development Plan Personnel Handbook 	2

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Interviews•Survey results•List of learning support services and student population served by such services•Accreditation Report•Data used to identify unique learning needs of students•Professional Learning Printed Information for Identifying Gifted Template for Collaborative Meeting Minutes Schedule for Tutorials Student Handbook : Students' Special Needs and Resources	2

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems

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, 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 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staffs 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 to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.		2.71	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Survey results •Interviews •Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff •Accreditation Report •Assessments of staffing needs •Documentation of highly qualified staff •Job descriptions Guidance and Counseling Individual Plan of Action 	3

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Survey results •School schedule •Interviews •Observations •School calendar •Sign in sheets - workshops for students, parents, staff 	2
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Survey results •Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements •Interviews •Accreditation Report •Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures. •System for maintenance requests •Maintenance schedules •Safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes •Media schedule Training PowerPoint Letters/correspondence - parents, students 	3
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Interviews •Budget related to media and information resource acquisition •Accreditation Report •Survey results •Observations 	3
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure •Survey results •Policies relative to technology use 	2

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Accreditation Report•Interviews•Observations•Program contracts, minutes, sign in sheets, Instructional blueprint for EOCTParent contact logOne Intervention Class Observation (Top 10%)	3
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning•Accreditation Report•Survey results•Description of IEP process•Description of referral process•Program contracts, minutes, sign in sheets, Graduation Coach InterviewParent contact logTitle I Parent Involvement Policy, PlanDiscipline MemorandumPamphlets with Student Achievements, activities, and competitionsInterviews - parents, students, teachers,	3

Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Systems with strong improvement processes are moving beyond anxiety about the current reality and focusing on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, that is, data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, & 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 (Dembo et al., 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 school 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).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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	Standard Performance Level
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.	2.2

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols•Observations•Survey results•Interviews•Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance•Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free•District's Common Assessments and Data Reports Testing Schedules (Formative and Summative)	3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Interviews•Observations•Accreditation Report•School Improvement Plan•Title I Plan•Template for Collaborative Planning	2
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Documentation of attendance and training related to data use•Survey results•Observations•Accreditation Report•Agendas for Faculty Meetings•Principal's Newsletters•Professional Learning 360 Report•Data Analysis Printed Expectations•Collaborative Meeting Template	2

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Student surveys•Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data•Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning•Accreditation Report•Evidence of student readiness for the next level•Evidence of student growth•Observations•Evidence of student success at the next level•Interviews•Principal's Newsletters Principal's Agendas for Faculty Meetings in Readiness for Testing	2
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Survey results•Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals•Accreditation Report•School quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, conditions that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals•Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups•Interviews•Collaborative Learning Template Data Use Memorandums from Principal	2

Learning Environment

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. External review team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a 4 point scale with 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 7 learning environments included in ELEOT.

ELEOT

<i>Environments</i>	<i>Level</i>
A. Equitable Learning Environment	2.0
B. High Expectations Environment	2.48
C. Supportive Learning Environment	2.95
D. Active Learning Environment	3.08
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	2.22
F. Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.0
G. Digital Learning Environment	1.56

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

The external review for B.E.S.T. (Business, Engineering, Science, and Technology) Academy High School at Benjamin S. Carson was conducted on April 23 and 24, 2013. The four-member team came prepared to visit the school after reading and reviewing the school's written summary, Self Assessment, diagnostic reports, and school improvement plan. The team met on April 22 to review each team member's notes and discuss the school's submitted information prior to the first day's visit on the campus. The External Review Team received a well-prepared notebook from the school containing the agenda and other important information for each team member's use throughout the visit and team's work.

B.E.S.T. Academy High School's Self Assessment included indicator ratings for all standards of threes and fours on a four point scale. The External Team discussed the strong evidence that would be necessary to concur with the school about the level four self-ratings for indicators. The team did not agree with the school on many of the indicators after the of the first day of on-site reviews, interviews, and observations. This was a time that the team discussed the individual indicators and standards for the second rating. Unfortunately, the team could not affirm the school's Self Assessment report to be honest and open in its appraisal.

The second day was spent reviewing all submitted artifacts for each standard. There were many artifacts that provided more positive evidence for improving some of the ratings that had been rated low during the team's initial work. The school is commended for its collection of artifacts for each standard and indicator. The artifacts were well-organized and most helpful. Although the External Review Team found no level fours for indicators, we were able to move several level two ratings, based on observations and interviews, to level three ratings. A caveat is that the conference room had charts on the wall with the faculty teams' work on indicators. This indicated to the team that the faculty had a process and had discussed the indicators and self-ratings. Most of the charts had notes on the strengths and how the school could improve in that area. Several notes from teachers compared closely with the evidence the team observed or heard.

Stakeholder groups were interviewed. These included 4 administrators; 11 Leadership Team members; 13 teachers and support staff; 17 students, and 9 parents and community partners for a grand total of 54. The External Review Team was impressed by each group's support for the school. The stakeholder groups were all open, honest, and helpful to the team with their responses and suggestions. The principal, Mr. Gary Cantrell, was helpful, articulate, and honest in his presentation, responses to questions, and clarification of artifact information. The assistant principals and academy leaders were also honest and helpful throughout the visit. Though the written report and information were not completely aligned with what the External Review Team observed and heard during interviews, the team was given an immediate and honest response to all questions or concerns.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

There are several strong practices that the External Review Team noted through interviews, observations, written reports, and documents provided to the team. First, the leadership and staff are passionate about the school and their work. The principal communicates often with parents and the community. Students and parents that represented a cross-section of the school stated that there are strong, caring relationships between the adults in the school and students. Students confirmed that they take ownership for their learning and success and support each other. All four members of the review team commented about seeing peers help each other during the observations in classrooms. Finally, the students, parents, community, faculty, and staff truly care about this beautiful and well-maintained school's success.

This high school is relatively new and will graduate its first class in 2013-2014. There are currently 200+ students in grades nine through twelve. Facilities are well-maintained, environmentally-designed, technological, and spacious.

The school has several constraints: 97% of the students are from economically-disadvantaged homes; 51% of the students are under the responsibility of a grandparent(s); 41% of the community has less than a high school education; 10% of the community are unemployed; and, the school is located in Atlanta's highest crime area. In spite of these constraints, the leaders, teachers, students, and other stakeholders desire to be at this school and to continue to work toward implementing a successful, gender-based educational program.

The constraints for the high school will not prevent the school from improving in the areas identified as needing improvement. The constraints should not prevent the school from carefully reviewing and discussing the improvement opportunities in this report. There are two major themes for improvement that the External Review Team agreed upon after reviewing the evidence and the Self Assessment .

First, all students must be held to high standards in all courses. Teachers can use instructional strategies that require students to apply knowledge and skills and they can personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address the individual learning needs of each student. Technology can be a valuable resource for the teachers as instructional tools and it can be a valuable learning resource for the students. A link must consistently be made between expectations for student achievement to the planning and instructional strategies. There is currently a lack of consistency in expectations, instruction, interventions, and progress- monitoring from student to student, teacher to teacher, and class to class. The school's professional learning about high-quality, research-based teaching and learning strategies in gender-based schools has weakened since the school was established a few years ago. There appears to be a major lack of consistency and focus for all in professional learning, collaboration on strategies and data, and learning support systems.

Protection of instruction time is not a schoolwide priority. The principal and other school leadership express a desire and have the work ethic to support the instructional time, but the External Review Team's interviews and observations resulted in a specific need for a more focused, orderly learning

environment for all. The school's frequent turnover in leadership may be another constraint for protecting instructional time because there has been little time to have truly implemented and monitored a discipline plan aligned to teaching and learning.

While the school does have a multitude of technological resources, teachers are not fully taking advantage of them as teaching tools. Students do not feel they have access to what is available and they are not pervasively using technology as learning tools. The use of digital learning tools was the lowest of all areas observed in classrooms. A more focused effort to enhance instruction through the use of technology will increase teacher effectiveness and student engagement.

Another major theme that emerged from this review process was that of improving professional practices and student success through focusing on teacher observation and evaluation data as well as student learning data. Continuously collecting, analyzing, and evaluating data from a variety of data sources will provide the teachers with better current information to improve student learning. A variety of data sources from teacher evaluation processes are needed in order to refine and improve the professional practices that impact student learning.

Collaboration, though evident at the school, may need to be more frequent and more focused on student learning results. Students are not achieving or making gains as a whole. Productive discussions are needed about high expectations, the examination of formative data for individual students and teachers, and the monitoring processes. Systematic processes and procedures for processing data and informing curriculum or instruction are needed.

In order to improve student learning, instruction, and organizational conditions, the school must ensure the participation of all staff in rigorous, data-driven professional learning related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data. Professional learning is vital for the school to implement the changes needed to improve student learning.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

Observations of student learning in sixteen classrooms resulted in the External Review Team finding a great difference in what the school's Self Assessment findings are and what the team observed. The use of a variety of data sources to adjust curriculum and instruction was not clearly evident (2.0 overall average on a 4.0 scale) because very little differentiated instruction was observed. The visiting team did not see all or most students having equal access to classroom discussions, activities, or support. In some classes, there were no responses from the teachers to the students who did not respond and did not make eye contact with the teacher. The school's own ratings were at the highest level.

Progress monitoring and feedback for the students would link with the findings on adjusting the curriculum

and instruction to meet individual or small group learning needs. This learning environment area was a 2.2. Students in several classrooms were not actively engaged and did not have opportunities to share in discussions with the teacher and/or other students. The team did make a positive note that several students were seen helping their peers on their own initiatives.

High expectations for student learning is an area for improvement. The learning environment observations yielded results at 2.5. There are teachers and classrooms where the team observed high expectations for learning, but there were also classrooms where every student was expected to learn at a lower expectation level. Many of the teachers' questions were not at the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. The students and parents confirmed these low expectations for some students and high expectations for others. Very little evidence of exemplars of high quality student work were noted. The team did observe excellent use of exemplars in three classrooms.

Paradoxically, the school believes it is effectively using their plentiful technology for most students, but the team rated the use of technology for student learning with the average of lowest rating of 1.6. The team did not observe the use of the multitude of excellent learning digital tools that are available to the teachers and to the students. There was little evidence of: the use of digital tools to communicate and work collaboratively; the use of digital tools to conduct research or create original works; or the use digital tools to gather or evaluate information. Team members observed excellent use of graphing and scientific calculators in mathematics and science as well as the use of computers for word processing in an English classroom. The use of computers by students in lab classes was also noted.

The support for student learning and success was evident during the team's observations. There were several classrooms where teachers and students demonstrated a positive attitude toward learning. There were teachers observed providing clarification and help to students. One student was observed in a JROTC class asking the teacher to clarify and offer assistance to understand the writing assignment. A physics class had one student who was very quiet and the teacher walked near him several times to quietly check for understanding as he offered help to the student. All interview groups affirmed that teachers provide support and truly care about the students. This component of an effective learning environment received an overall average rating of 3.0.

Finally, another paradox observed by the team was the findings of a well-managed learning environment (3.0 average). The actual observed student learning behaviors during the team members' observations within the classroom indicated that most of the classes were well-managed. However, informal team observations in the common areas of the school and during the instructional intervention period did not support the finding of a well-managed learning environment. Students in several hallway areas were seen off-task, lounging against tables and walls, spilling out into the hallways (two classes where no adult was seen at that time), and talking or laughing loudly. Student interviews also confirmed that these disruptions to learning are frequent. The External Review Team did not find that the total school learning environment is consistently positive. The Team concluded in its discussions that the improvement focus on collaboration, using data to inform instruction, high expectations for all, and monitoring progress and learning environment will lead to the best learning and achievement for all and at all times.

The External Review Team found B.E.S.T. Academy High School to be a school led by caring and

leaders and professional staff. Parents, students, and community supporters express belief in the school's purpose and mission.

The requirements of the AdvancED Accreditation Internal and External reviews of the five effective, research-based standards have been validated and met as affirmed by this External Review Team. The school's principal and leaders have stated a commitment to the improvement requirements. The External Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that B.E.S.T. Academy High School continue to be accredited.

The team expresses appreciation to the principal, Mr. Gary Cantrell, the assistant principals, and academy leadership for their hospitality during our visit. We sincerely appreciate the school's internal and external review chairman, Mrs. Mona Nelson, who tirelessly prepared for us through the gathering of the notebooks, artifacts, and materials needed for the team's work. The team is also most grateful to the school's leadership and community members, parents, teachers, and students for warmly receiving us into the school and for sharing their perceptions, ideas, commendations, and suggestions for improvement.

The Team challenges the leaders, professional staff, and the appropriate district representatives to receive and study this report and to positively collaborate to implement and monitor the progress of the required actions. Continue to support and strengthen the areas where the school is currently making progress. We challenge the school to truly commit to the improvement opportunities in an effort to enhance the quality and capacity of the school to immediately improve student learning success and growth. Act on the required actions as the team believes these four requirements to be fundamental to the school's continued improvement and basic to highly-effective schools everywhere.

Required Actions

1. Encourage, support, and expect all students to be held to high standards in all courses of study.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
2.4

Interviews conducted by the External Review Team revealed inconsistent expectations for students in all courses of study. Several teachers and students stated that expectations for students were not equitable throughout courses and/or with teachers. One teacher and two parents stated in interviews that there are students who enter ninth grade who are two and three years behind in mathematics and/or reading. They further explained that while there exist multiple academic support systems such as the Georgia Tech tutors and the extra support period scheduled during the day, "...the students do not consistently take advantage of them."

In sixteen classrooms observed by the External Review Team, there was a below-average score on high expectations. One observation target was, "The student is asked to respond to questions that require higher order thinking" (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing) with that average score being 2.2 of 4 possible. It was stated in an interview with two staff members and one parent that expectations for a student's learning are often established by the choice of the student rather than set high expectations of the teacher.

The External Review Team recognized the positive impact on learning that having a period for interventions built within the master schedule. The team observed several classrooms; however, where students were off task and little tutoring was taking place. During informal walk-throughs of the hallways and intervention period classrooms, nearly half of the classes were observed on-task and using time for the purpose of the intervention period. One example was a classroom where the teacher was working with students on reading and writing skills. All students were engaged in some level of practice writing. In two classrooms, the team observed students milling about the classroom while the teacher was not present. Loud student laughter and talking was heard on the second floor in the hallway during the intervention period.

The External Review Team reviewed sample curriculum maps and guides, lesson plans, and data notebooks that were well-prepared and focused on student success through small group or individualized instruction. However, this was not observed in most classrooms.

The team did note that the reviewed notebooks and plans were those of the classroom teachers where more effective student learning behaviors were observed. Quality of learning matters.

All stakeholders are collectively accountable for student learning. The culture of the school must be characterized by a community and responsibility for every student's achievement.

The culture of the school should support and expect all students to be held to high standards in all courses.

2. Develop and consistently utilize a specific set of research-based instructional strategies designed to increase student engagement and achievement through mastery and application of content knowledge in all courses.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
3.3

There is little evidence that teachers consistently and collaboratively use research-based instructional strategies that result in student achievement growth. Observations in sixteen classrooms revealed low ratings in monitoring student progress and providing feedback: "The student has an opportunity to revise/improve work based on feedback."

Another weak observed learning area was the lack of understanding of how (his) work is assessed by the teacher. Both of these two indicator averages are well-below average (1.8 out of 4 possible). The B.E.S.T. Academy's school improvement plan cites student achievement score averages as low as 22% mastering content in the area of mathematics. Other data reports reviewed by the External Review Team have no academic gains also. Teachers and parents in interviews explained that many students enter the high school two years below grade level in mathematics and reading. The use of feedback for improving learning was clearly not evident in the majority of classrooms observed.

Parents and students shared that they do not believe students are all held to the same high standards of achievement and application of learning. Observations affirmed this perception with a low-average rating for high expectations. Teachers, as shared through interviews, truly care about the students and school. Parents, leadership, and community partners stated that teachers work long hours and have not had full professional training to implement the gender-based school's instructional strategies yet.

The External Team observed strong participation in after-school tutorials by number of teachers, tutors, and community volunteers. One parent stated, "Building relationships is important. We (the school) have been hurt by high teacher-turnover and lack of consistent leadership. This impacts on our academic growth." One student told the External Review Team that students may bond with a teacher who provides support and effective strategies, but the teacher may be gone the next year.

Personalizing instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs requires deliberate instructional planning by the teachers. Student achievement gains will follow as teachers consistently hold high expectations and provide constant learning support and encouragement.

3. Create a formal process to ensure participation of all staff in rigorous, continuous data driven professional learning opportunities aligned with the school's purpose.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
3.11

External Review Team interviews with stakeholder groups indicate that while some teachers have participated in professional learning opportunities aligned with the school's purpose, there is significant inconsistency in ensuring that all faculty members are afforded the same opportunity. Administrators and instructional leaders report that access to staff development content aligned with the school's purpose, such as best practices in instructional practices specifically for single gender schools, is "redelivered" to new teachers by those who attended the sessions. Although administrators and instructional leaders did not cite a concern regarding this practice, the External Review Team's classroom observations showed relatively low scores in areas such as equitable learning environment (2.0 average), digital learning environment (1.6 average), and higher order thinking skills (2.2 average). Summative data reports indicate lack of student performance growth. Teachers and teacher-leaders confirmed that they have some individual and departmental choices in what professional learning is needed. The funding for the original learning plan has been cut. Evidence from observations and interviews with all interviewed groups clearly affirmed the need for school-wide, intensive professional learning focused on single-gender, educational best-practices. This work will lead to achieving the school's purpose and academic improvement for all students. Research on single-gender schools is significant and essential for the professionals within this type of school. Collaboration is meaningful when the school's professional staff hold the knowledge base to plan and implement best practices in this school environment. Teachers and administrators must continuously and collaboratively analyze disaggregated student learning data and teacher data (from teacher observations and walk-throughs). The data that is collected must be analyzed by all through the lens of the school's purpose and beliefs.

4. Improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and organizational conditions through the continuous, comprehensive use and evaluation of student learning data.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

5.2

The school's principal and administrative team described their use of student learning data as they interpreted, evaluated, and planned goals for improved academic success. The thirty minute extra time scheduled now during the seven period schedule was implemented recently to add time for teachers to address individual and small group academic support or enhancement. One administrator stated, "We recently began this intervention period and it's still a work in progress." The guidance counselor stated that the students are scheduled through that office using the students' transcripts. Teachers, parents, and community volunteers stated that the continuous, comprehensive evaluation of student learning data is constrained by the lack of consistency in planning and the frequent changes and/or instability of the school's leadership and staff. This is "...not the fault of the school's leadership and teachers," shared one parent stakeholder. One teacher stated, "We're small and we've evolved in two years. Departments now are established and we meet often and regularly."

The External Review Team read and reviewed a number of documents that are used for assessing and planning. Sample data notebooks for some teachers (three reviewed) indicated a strong attention to student data and how curriculum and/or instruction is adjusted. The school improvement plan is detailed and focuses upon academic strategies that should lead to student success. The school's self-rating is the highest level of 4 on the Self Assessment report. The External Review Team did not hear or see compelling evidence of students' academic growth or using results to evaluate curricular or instructional strategies. The school's Self Assessment and summary described teacher-student ratios as 33:1. This constraint could cause some of the negative growth in academic success for the students. The External Review Team could not confirm this high student-teacher ration throughout our observations.

The improvement of student learning, instruction, and organizational conditions are understood by the leadership and staff to be very effective for all students. However, the External Review Team's interviews and observations yielded evidence that there appeared to be a disconnect about the reality of what is happening in all classrooms for all students. The team did not see or hear on-going progress monitoring, planning, or instruction based on the use student learning data.

All leaders, teachers, and professional staff must have a deep understanding of and ability to plan and use assessment data from a variety of sources to improve overall and individual student achievement, to address learning gaps, to enhance instruction, and to engage learners. A comprehensive feedback and adjustment process will ensure continuous improvement for the student, subgroups of students, and the entire school. The principal and other school leaders must provide an effective learning environment for the teachers and students through strong, consistent management and organizational skills.

Addenda

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the Team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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, along with 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 (founded 1917) joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students. The Northwest Accreditation Commission joined the AdvancED network in 2011.

External Review

B.E.S.T Academy High School

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

Report of the External Review for Carver Early College

55 McDonough Blvd. SE

Atlanta, GA, 30315
US

Ms. Marcene R Thornton

Date: April 23, 2014 - April 24, 2014



North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

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Introduction to the External Review

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of student performance or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, as well as evaluations of Student Performance, the Learning Environment, Stakeholder Feedback and Assurances.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. Before implementation, the standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains a detailed evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, identification of Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards (if appropriate), and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review team.

The AdvancED Standards and Indicators are the first of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Using indicator-specific performance levels, the External Review Team evaluates the degree to which the institution meets each indicator on a scale of 1 to 4. The scores assigned to the indicators are averaged to arrive at a single score. This score, along with scores from evaluations of student performance and stakeholder feedback, will be used to determine the accreditation status of the institution.

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	3.09
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Standard 1: The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and 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 30,000 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.

Standard 1			
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) • Observations • Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the school's purpose • Interviews 	3.0
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Observations • Survey results • The school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report 	3.0
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • The school data profile • Interviews • Accreditation Report • The school continuous improvement plan 	3.0

Standard 2: The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 2			
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Student handbooks • Governing body policies, procedures, and practices • Staff handbooks • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Board Policy Manual 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Governing body minutes relating to training • Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest • Proof of legal counsel • Assurances, certifications • Interviews • Governing body training plan • Observations • Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest • Governing code of ethics 	3.0
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of school leadership • School improvement plan developed by the school • Accreditation Report • Stakeholder input and feedback • Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation • Communications regarding board actions • Survey results regarding functions of the governing body • Observations • Agendas and minutes of meetings • Interviews 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Survey results • Observations • Interviews • Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report • Examples of decisions in support of the school's continuous improvement plan 	4.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes from meetings with stakeholders • Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys • Survey responses • Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews 	3.0
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation • Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice and student success noted • Observations • Job specific criteria • Representative supervision and evaluation reports • Interviews • Professional Development catalog 	3.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The school's leadership and staff have fostered a strong supportive culture which embraces the school's purpose and direction.

2.4

Through stakeholder interviews, observations, and reviews of artifacts, the team discovered a strong school culture that embraces, supports, and furthers the school's purpose and direction. Administrators and staff actively encourage and promote a school culture that provides a rigorous academic environment to support students' opportunities to complete up to sixty hours of college credit while in high school.

A positive culture that is congruent with a school's purpose allows students to thrive and provides a desirable environment for both teachers and students.

Standard 3: The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student 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 to 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.

Standard 3
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school'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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Lesson plans • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Learning expectations for different courses • Posted learning objectives • Representative samples of student work across courses • Course schedules • Enrollment patterns for various courses • Course descriptions • Observations 	4.0
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum guides • Observations • Surveys results • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps • Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum • Feedback form for classroom lesson plans 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher evaluation criteria • Professional development focused on these strategies • Authentic assessments • Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource • Interviews • Observations • Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool • Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge • Findings from supervisor walk-thrus and observations • Surveys results • Accreditation Report • Interdisciplinary projects • Observation timeline • Tutorial sessions schedule 	4.0
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum maps • Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books • Supervision and evaluation procedures • Observations • Surveys results • Interviews • Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process • Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs • Accreditation Report 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of cross curricular projects, interdisciplinary instruction, and classroom action research project • Accreditation Report • Common language, protocols and reporting tools • Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees • Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings • Survey results • Observations • Interviews 	3.0
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning 	3.0
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Records of meetings and walk thrus/feedback sessions • Observations • Survey results • Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff • Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices • Interviews 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days • Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress • Accreditation Report • Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process 	3.0
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of students matched to adult advocate • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Interviews • Observations • Curriculum and activities of formal adult advocate structure • Master schedule with time for formal adult advocate structure • Description of formal adult advocate structures 	4.0
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting • Sample of egrade Grade Report 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Survey results • Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs • Accreditation Report • Crosswalk between professional learning and school purpose and direction • Observations • Sample agenda for professional development Keys for differentiated instructions Sample of "My PLC (Professional Learning Center)" web page 	3.0
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning 	3.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The school has a formal student advocacy structure that addresses the social, emotional, and college readiness of all students.

3.9

Examination of the master schedule and interviews with stakeholders confirmed that school personnel take a proactive approach to ensure an advocate is in place for each student at CEC. All students are assigned a mentor/advocate upon entry into the ninth grade and remain with that advocate until they graduate. This four-year commitment affords students the opportunity to create an important, meaningful bond with a dedicated teacher as they mature throughout their high school years.

Having a caring adult with whom to build a positive relationship and who will serve as an advocate for students' needs is beneficial to high school students as they progress to independent living and choices for their future.

2. Research-based effective instructional strategies are used successfully throughout the school.

3.3

Classroom observations and numerous artifacts demonstrated effective usage of research-based instructional strategies. Flexible grouping, collaborative work groups, student-facilitated instruction, gaming activities, role play, real-life simulations, and use of instructional technology were powerful examples of the use of effective instructional strategies. Students were highly engaged and actively participated. Teachers served as learning facilitators.

The use of effective instructional strategies maximizes instructional time and promotes the achievement of performance goals.

3. The school's rigorous and challenging curriculum provides all students with learning experiences which maximize potential for success.

3.1

Reviews of artifacts and classroom observations provided ample evidence that all students have opportunities to successfully prepare for college entrance and beyond. Many students graduate from CEC with multiple hours of college credits already earned. Scholarship opportunities abound and numerous students are awarded financial assistance to the next level. Curriculum implementation also provides numerous leadership opportunities for students.

A strong, rigorous curriculum taught with fidelity provides students with optimum learning experiences.

Standard 4: The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

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 30,000 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. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff • Accreditation Report • Documentation of highly qualified staff • School budget 	4.0
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • Survey results • School schedule • Interviews • Alignment of budget with school purpose and direction • Observations • School calendar 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures. • System for maintenance requests • Maintenance schedules 	3.0
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Budget related to media and information resource acquisition • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Observations • Data on media and information resources available to students and staff • Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information 	3.0
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure • Observations • Survey results • Policies relative to technology use • Interviews 	3.0
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Observations • Student peer-to-peer mentoring 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Observations • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Interviews • Career Day Outline • Student mentoring system 	3.0

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The staff at Carver Early College is more than adequate to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students.

4.1

Through reviews of artifacts and stakeholder interviews, the team found that CEC enjoys an excellent staff retention rate. The administration is highly regarded and respected. The staff works collaboratively during common planning, in professional learning communities, in vertical and horizontal articulation, and in cross-campus professional development. These support systems promote efficient performance. Staff members actively seek professional growth opportunities to enhance their skills in providing services to students.

Retaining highly-qualified staff is critical to the success of the school's purpose and direction.

Standard 5: The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Systems 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 5			
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance 	3.0

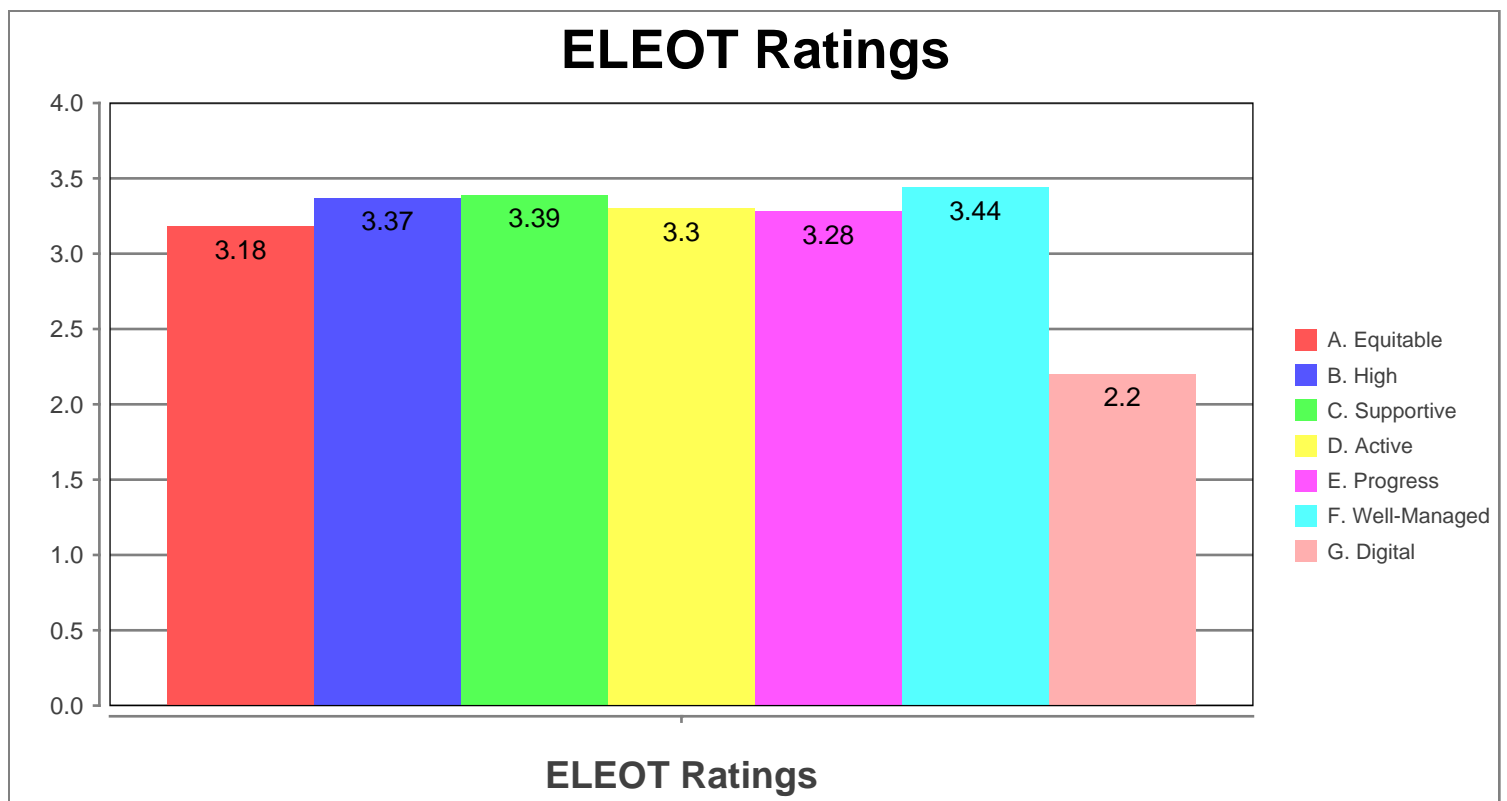
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Interviews • Observations • List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning • Accreditation Report 	2.0
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Documentation of attendance and training related to data use • Survey results • Observations • Accreditation Report • Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data 	3.0
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student surveys • Accreditation Report • Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans • Evidence of student readiness for the next level • Evidence of student growth • Observations • Evidence of student success at the next level • Interviews 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Minutes of board meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals • Survey results • Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals • Accreditation Report • School quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, conditions that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals • Interviews 	3.0

Learning Environment

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. External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.



Student Performance

Student Performance on assessments is the second of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze student performance data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the assessments used by the institution, the degree to which the institution properly administered the assessments, analyzed and acted on the results, and the overall performance of students using a set of rubrics. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Student Performance Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Assessment Quality	4.0
Test Administration	4.0
Quality of Learning	4.0
Equity of Learning	4.0

Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys are directly correlated to the AdvancED Accreditation 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 and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Stakeholder Feedback Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Questionnaire Administration	4.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	4.0

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

The AdvancED External Review for Carver Early College was conducted over a two-day period, April 23-24, 2014. The school was well-prepared for the review and transparent in its Self Assessment and presentations. Staff members expressed a desire for an open and honest appraisal of their work.

The External Review Team interviewed forty-six stakeholders including the principal, assistant principal, teachers, support staff, students, and parents. The team observed twenty-eight classrooms using the Effective Learning Environment Observational Tool. Numerous artifacts were examined and reviewed, and additional artifacts were immediately provided upon request.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

One of the outstanding attributes of Carver Early College is the sustained high graduation rate it has enjoyed for several years. Parents, students, and staff readily acknowledge the 98.7% graduation rate of 2013 and administration could easily identify the single student who did not graduate on time. For an urban school that is 100% minority and 92% economically disadvantaged, this achievement is remarkable. The very high CCRPI (College and Career Readiness Performance Index) also confirms the superior achievement of the students of the school. The leadership of the school is highly regarded and well-respected in the community.

High student achievement scores are only one measure of the success of CEC. Students are able to achieve up to sixty college credits while in high school through partnerships with Georgia State University and Atlanta Metropolitan College. Students and parents attest to the value of these partnerships and embrace the opportunities to excel. Students are also afforded many safety nets to ensure their success in these rigorous programs. Such supports as tutorials, credit recovery, and second-chance opportunities are utilized by students to strengthen their academic standing.

Another strong support system is the school's advisement program. Each day students meet for thirty minutes with their advisor. Students are assigned an advisor in the ninth grade who remains with the student throughout their years at CEC. This powerful practice provides students with an advocate who supports them academically, socially, and emotionally. Advisement provides opportunities for mentorship and positive student-teacher interactions. Topics such as college entrance requirements, scholarships, resume development, career explorations, and public speaking are addressed during advisement. This prime time spent with a dedicated teacher helps students build self-confidence and work toward self-actualization.

The school has an admirable and well-known mission and vision statement. Stakeholders are familiar with the concepts of early college environment. However, it would be beneficial to all stakeholders to revisit the mission and vision regularly. As purposes and directions evolve, so should the mission and vision statements to ensure continuity of alignment with performance goals.

While the school displays excellent student achievement results, one area of growth identified by the school is to move students from "meets" to "exceeds" on standardized testing. Staff interviews confirmed this desire. One method to achieve this goal would be to utilize a comprehensive data collection system and align student performance results with effective instructional strategies. The school has the resources to achieve this goal within its own educational program. Teachers would benefit from sharing data across grade levels and content areas.

Additionally, the school would benefit from developing a system of communication to share students' accolades and achievements with their community. Carver Early College is an exceptional high-performing small high school and its accomplishments should be shared with others.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

Classroom observations yielded rich and robust experiences. Every classroom exhibited strong research-based instructional strategies. The team observed students engaged in small group collaboration, gaming activities, real-life simulations, student-facilitated instruction, flexible grouping, quick-check mathematics assessments, and teachers serving as facilitators. These instructional strategies contributed to high levels of student engagement in meaningful learning. Instructional technology was used appropriately by students. Interactive white boards, computers, cell phone applications, and graphic calculators were all used effectively in classrooms. This twenty-first century technology helps to prepare students for their future training and work.

Rituals and routines for classroom management were observed. These practices produced a positive learning environment whereby instructional time was maximized. Smooth transitions from activity to activity as well as classroom to classroom were observed. Students clearly understood expectations for behavior and learning in their school. This affords teachers the opportunity to take advantage of the entire instructional block. Students and staff displayed and verbalized mutual respect, creating an environment conducive to learning.

The student advisement period was observed and proved to be a valuable time of the day. Upperclassmen were observed as they mentored underclassmen while discussing entry into college and the importance of their time at CEC. Peer-to-peer mentoring was originated and developed by upperclassmen in the school as an outreach to younger students. This is an example of how innovative practices are encouraged and embraced by the faculty. Many opportunities for student leadership are evident throughout the school.

The use of data across the school and at the classroom level is an area of concern. According to interviews, teachers frequently use formative assessment data at the classroom level. However, there is a lack of evidence that these data are integrated into a comprehensive data collection plan across the school. Additionally,

achievement data should be correlated with research-based practices to ensure that all students' needs are met.

The External Review Team commends the faculty for dedication to the students of the school and their academic achievement. The team would also like to commend the administration of the school for their thorough preparation for the AdvancED review. Special appreciation is given to the parents who participated in the review. Insights and observations from these stakeholders were both beneficial and supportive.

The team also thanks the personnel of Carver Early College for their kindness, hospitality, and transparency throughout the visit. Much appreciation is given to the staff members who assisted the team each day and provided all that was necessary to make the visit a success.

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 criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED is introducing a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduces an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; 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.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and Indicators; the Analysis of Student Performance; and the Engagement and Involvement of Stakeholders. Within each domain institutions will be able to 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 can be a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Required Action as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected Indicator.

The IEQ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. Your institution's IEQ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Your actions for improvement that have a positive impact will be reflected in your IEQ score.

IEQ Institutional Score: 323

Teaching and Learning Impact: 324
(Standards 3 and 5; Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 327
(Standards 1 and 2; Stakeholder Engagement Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 314

(Standard 4)

The External Review team recommends that Carver Early College be granted a new five-year term of accreditation by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

Improvement Priority

1. Develop and implement a process for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data related to student achievement and organizational growth.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

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.

Description:

Through artifact reviews and stakeholder interviews, the External Review Team discovered a variety of data was available but little data have been formalized in such a way to compare instructional trends, program evaluations, or organizational conditions. Artifacts reflected some data collection but in-depth analyses of data was limited. Interviews confirmed that teachers used informal methods of collecting data (formative assessments, quick checks for understanding, etc.) as well as reviews of standardized tests. However, minimal evidence of data summaries for school-wide improvement was available.

Using data to drive the improvement efforts of the school is essential to continuous improvement.

Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:

Mrs. Kay H Sledge

Team Member:

Mr. Melvin K Blocker

Ms. Jayrelle Israel

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. 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 complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that confers accreditation upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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 joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, these divisions share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

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Report of the
External Review
for
Carver School of Health Sciences & Research

55 McDonough Blvd. SE

Atlanta, GA, 30315
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Ms. Yvette D. Williams, Principal

Date: April 23, 2014 - April 24, 2014



North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

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Introduction to the External Review

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of student performance or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, as well as evaluations of Student Performance, the Learning Environment, Stakeholder Feedback and Assurances.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. Before implementation, the standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains a detailed evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, identification of Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards (if appropriate), and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review team.

The AdvancED Standards and Indicators are the first of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Using indicator-specific performance levels, the External Review Team evaluates the degree to which the institution meets each indicator on a scale of 1 to 4. The scores assigned to the indicators are averaged to arrive at a single score. This score, along with scores from evaluations of student performance and stakeholder feedback, will be used to determine the accreditation status of the institution.

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	2.3
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Standard 1: The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and 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 30,000 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.

Standard 1			
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Observations • Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the school's purpose • Interviews • Purpose statements - past and present 	2.0
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Observations • Survey results • The school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report 	2.0
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	2.0

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Commit to consistently enforce policies and procedures that have been established that pertain to students code of ethics.

1.2

Artifacts, observations in multiple classrooms, and interviews with teachers and students indicated inconsistencies in the commitment to establishment and enforcement of challenging standards and policies on dress and behavior. Students and teachers articulated a strong need for a culture that sets and enforces standards for dress and behavior.

The lack of enforcement negatively affects the learning environment.

2. Formalize a process for revisiting and reviewing the purpose and direction of the school, being sure to include representatives from all stakeholders throughout the process.

1.1

The phrase “To see is to know” embodies the Carver School of Health Sciences and Research mission, which is “to prepare all students for success in life, service, and leadership.” Interviews revealed that staff members were involved in the development of the current mission/vision statements and agreed to maintain their core beliefs because they identified the school’s focus. Even though parents echoed support of the school’s purpose and direction, very few agreed that they were involved in the process and could articulate the purpose and direction of the school. Therefore, there is an indication that more stakeholders’ input is needed in the decision-making process.

Stakeholder involvement strengthens continuous improvement efforts by ensuring all entities have input regarding the purpose and direction of the school. Additionally, such involvement affords opportunities for stakeholders at all levels to offer their time, support, and other resources to foster student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Standard 2: The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 2			
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Student handbooks • Staff handbooks • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Governing body minutes relating to training • Assurances, certifications • Interviews • Communications about program regulations • Observations • Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest • Governing code of ethics 	3.0
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of school leadership • School improvement plan developed by the school • Accreditation Report • Stakeholder input and feedback • Communications regarding board actions • Survey results regarding functions of the governing body • Observations • Interviews 	2.0
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Survey results • Observations • Interviews • Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report 	3.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey responses • Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan • Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation • Observations • Interviews 	2.0

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. Develop and implement a plan to ensure that the school's leadership exercises its autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.

2.3

Evidence was provided indicating the responsibilities of the school's leaders; however, other artifacts such as observations and interviews indicated a need for the leadership to plan and implement the execution of those roles by asserting their leadership to meet goals for achievement and instruction and managing day-to-day operations effectively.

A more effective delegation of responsibilities will provide opportunities for leaders to become more assertive in their roles.

Standard 3: The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student 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 to 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.

Standard 3			
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school'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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Lesson plans • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Learning expectations for different courses • Posted learning objectives • Representative samples of student work across courses • Observations 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Surveys results • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps • Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum 	2.0
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher evaluation criteria • Authentic assessments • Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource • Interviews • Observations • Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge • Accreditation Report 	2.0
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum maps • Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books • Supervision and evaluation procedures • Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions • Observations • Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices • Surveys results • Interviews • Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs • Accreditation Report 	3.0
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Common language, protocols and reporting tools • Survey results • Observations • Interviews 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction 	3.0
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Records of meetings and walk thrus/feedback sessions • Observations • Survey results • Interviews 	3.0
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days • Accreditation Report 	2.0
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Interviews • Observations 	2.0
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Observations • Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices • Survey results • Sample report cards for each grade level and for all courses • Interviews • Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs • Accreditation Report • Observations 	3.0
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Survey results • List of learning support services and student population served by such services • Accreditation Report • Data used to identify unique learning needs of students 	3.0

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. Students have high levels of satisfaction with the support staff's efforts to keep them informed regarding their progress, opportunities, and requirements needed for academic success.

3.12

Interviews with students provided strong evidence that the school's counselor has an exemplary practice of being accessible to provide information about academic and personal issues or any other school related concerns that may affect student success. The counselor maintains an open door policy. The school has a strong outreach to parents. Administrators and teachers contribute to the high level of praise by the students.

Effective support counseling is paramount to student motivation and success.

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Plan, implement, and monitor professional learning opportunities on effective teaching strategies that foster rigorous learning such as differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, and higher order thinking.

3.3

Although classroom observations conducted during the review revealed a focus on standards included in the state mandated curriculum, limited evidence of challenging and rigorous teaching and learning practices was observed. The average rating on the “High Expectations Environment” section on the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) yielded a rating of 2.74, which indicates that student engagement in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks was somewhat evident, but not clearly pervasive throughout the school.

Engaging students in instructional activities that are challenging, but attainable supports students’ critical thinking and goes beyond just memorization. Such practices also support mastery and retention of knowledge, as students see the relevance and application of learning. Providing professional learning opportunities that support the implementation of such practices help ensure teachers are knowledgeable and comfortable providing accelerated instruction for all learners.

Standard 4: The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

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 30,000 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. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • School budgets for the last three years • Survey results • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	2.0
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • Survey results • School schedule • Interviews • Observations 	2.0
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures. 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Observations 	3.0
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews 	1.0
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills • Accreditation Report • Interviews • List of support services available to students • Observations 	2.0
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Observations • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Description of IEP process • Interviews • Description of referral process 	3.0

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Provide adequate instructional materials that are aligned to the purpose and direction of the school.

4.2

A review of artifacts revealed that the mission of the school is to prepare all students for success in life, service, and leadership. This would be inclusive of setting high expectations for student learning. However, observations and interviews revealed that resources were limited to support instruction. While instructional time is protected, the resource materials to support students' academic needs are unavailable in several classes.

Providing resources for classes, starting with class sets of textbooks, would be beneficial to students and teachers.

2. Establish ways to strategically redistribute duties and responsibilities among staff.

4.1

The school's Self Assessment reports that school personnel are employed, placed, and retained. However, interviews and observations did not support this assertion. Several faculty members serve in many capacities and struggle with understanding which role is most important to complete on a daily basis. Interviews indicated that this is due to budgeting issues.

It will be advantageous to give teachers the opportunity to instruct and redistribute the duties and responsibilities among the staff, which will assist teachers with maintaining a focus on instruction.

Standard 5: The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Systems 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 5			
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning • Observations • Accreditation Report 	2.0
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data • Survey results • Observations • Accreditation Report 	2.0
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning • Accreditation Report • Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans • Evidence of student readiness for the next level • Evidence of student growth • Observations • Evidence of student success at the next level • Interviews 	3.0
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	2.0

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Formalize a process to monitor and communicate comprehensive information regarding student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.

5.5

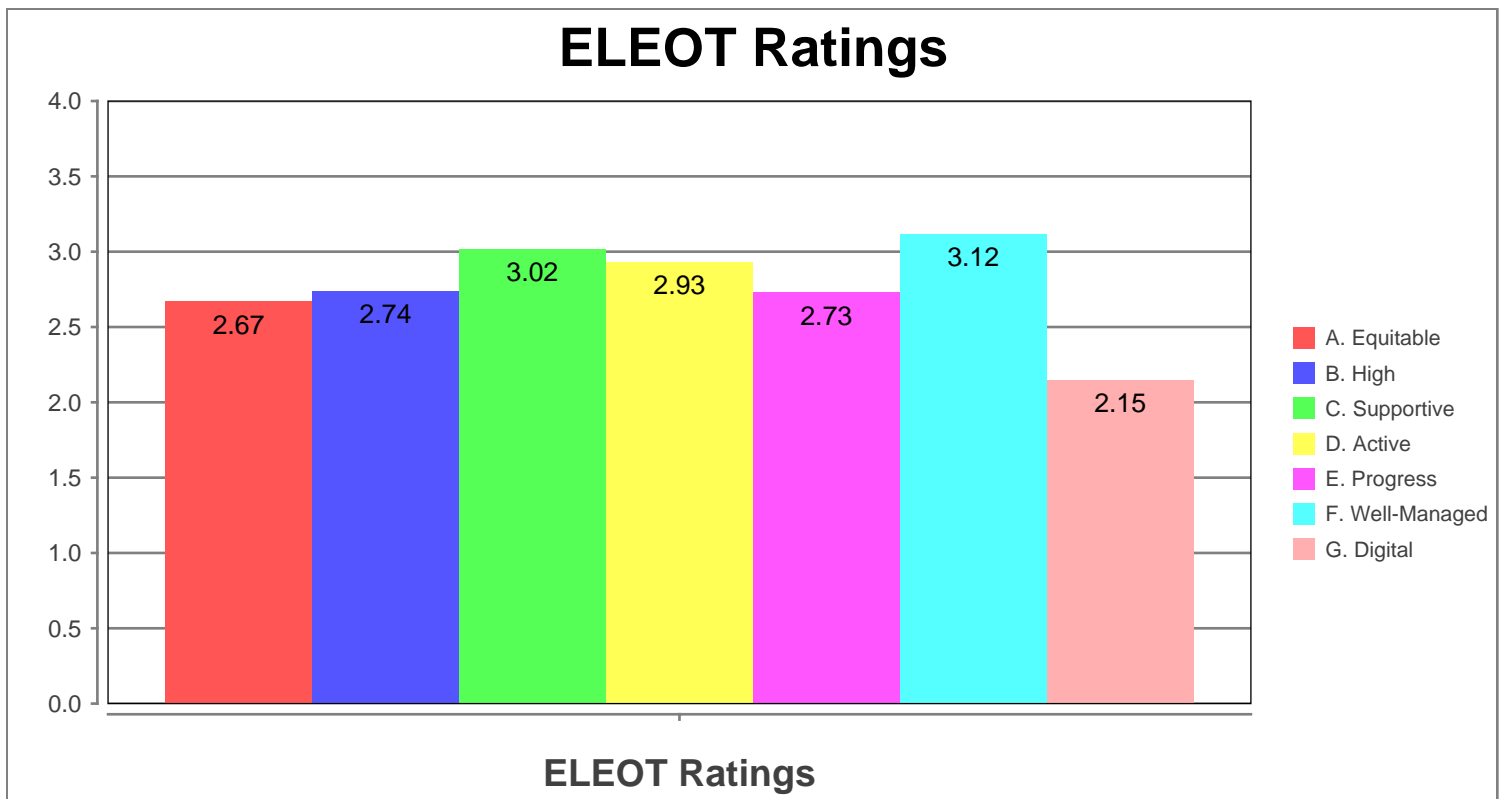
Staff interviews indicated that the leadership monitors information about student learning; however, artifacts did not include a plan or information regarding student learning, conditions that support student learning, or the achievement of school improvement goals being communicated to stakeholders. This was further amplified during interviews with parents and community partners.

Sharing information with parents and other stakeholders enhances the potential for increasing their involvement in meeting the school's needs and participation in school activities.

Learning Environment

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. External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.



Student Performance

Student Performance on assessments is the second of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze student performance data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the assessments used by the institution, the degree to which the institution properly administered the assessments, analyzed and acted on the results, and the overall performance of students using a set of rubrics. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Student Performance Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Assessment Quality	3.0
Test Administration	4.0
Quality of Learning	3.0
Equity of Learning	4.0

Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys are directly correlated to the AdvancED Accreditation 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 and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Stakeholder Feedback Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Questionnaire Administration	4.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.0

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

The Carver School of Health Sciences and Research External Review was held April 23-24, 2014. In preparation for the review, it was evidenced by the review of artifacts, interviews with stakeholders, and observations that the school spent an enormous amount of time preparing for the external review and was well prepared. The school was open and honest in its Self Assessment, as Required Actions and Opportunities for Improvement were duly noted. Moreover, interviews with various stakeholders and a presentation by the interim principal affirmed the Self Assessment. The External Review Team engaged in several activities before and during the review. Throughout the review, the staff and stakeholders responded to the team's questions and requests pertaining to data and other artifacts.

The External Review Team was pleased to interview one hundred nineteen (119) stakeholders to gain further insight and perceptions regarding the school's adherence to the Advanc-ED Standards and effectiveness of the school in the meeting its continuous improvement goals. Among the 119 stakeholders interviewed were two (2) administrators, twenty six (26) teachers, nine (9) parents, community and business partners, seventy six (76) students, and six (6) support staff. During the school visits, thirty three (33) classroom observations were conducted.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

The team found that while the school has formal systems to guide its operation, several areas tended to be managed through informal procedures and practices. Expanding the development of formal systems would strengthen and improve the school's systemic structures that support continuous improvement. The team noted several themes that emerged during the external review process. One theme resulting in a Powerful Practice was the school's commitment to provide and coordinate services to meet the unique needs of students. Although there is one staff member assigned to the position, other staff members join in to help where ever there is a need. Because of the loss of funding and the reduction in staff, the staff has accepted the responsibility to multi-task where possible. The school has dedicated and committed staff members who work collaboratively to promote its purpose and direction. During interviews, parents and students highlighted their high levels of satisfaction with the counseling staff's efforts to keep them informed regarding opportunities and requirements needed for academic success and students' progress.

Several Opportunities for Improvement were noted. While the majority of the staff works collaboratively with the counseling staff in sharing responsibilities to ensure students' needs for academic success are met, it is suggested that the school explore and establish ways to strategically redistribute duties and responsibilities among the entire staff.

Other themes that evolved as Opportunities for Improvement encompassed several areas. A major theme involved developing and implementing a formalized process to engage stakeholders in a systematic and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school-wide purpose and direction for student success. Evidence supported this opportunity based upon interviews with staff, parents, students, and other stakeholders. Interviews and survey results confirmed that some staff members were involved in the development of the mission/vision statements and agreed to maintain their core beliefs because they identify the school's focus. Even though parents and students echoed support of the school's purpose and direction, very few could articulate the mission/vision of the school and agreed that they were not involved in the process. Therefore, there is an indication that more stakeholder involvement is needed. Stakeholder involvement strengthens continuous improvement efforts by ensuring all entities have input regarding the purpose and direction for the school.

Another recurring theme was developing a system to identify, implement, and monitor comprehensive professional learning opportunities for staff. A focal point was that of identifying effective teaching strategies that foster rigorous learning such as differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, and higher order thinking skills. Evidence supported a need to develop a structure to systematically use staff supervision and evaluation data to improve professional practice and student success. Further, evidence indicated that staff participate in professional learning opportunities and a process exists for the evaluation of staff. For example, teachers participate in mini-professional learning sessions. Teachers new to the school receive orientation from other staff. However, there was no indication that data from observations and evaluations determined the professional learning in which staff participate. Additionally, there was no evidence to verify that the instructional staff integrates the lessons from professional development into their daily teaching practices. To promote continuous improvement, administrators monitor teachers frequently through classroom observations to determine their effectiveness. Although leaders conduct observations, data from evaluations are not used systematically to identify comprehensive professional learning opportunities for the staff. Professional learning opportunities correlated with evaluations permit staff to enhance their growth to maximize student learning.

Another area for an Opportunity for Improvement was that of providing adequate instructional materials aligned to the purpose and direction of the school. Staff reported that in some instances, textbooks and other supplies are nonexistent, which may be a budgeting issue. However, it is suggested that a plan be developed to ensure that the school's leadership exercises its autonomy to meet the goals for achievement and instruction to manage the day-to-day operations effectively without increasing the budget, perhaps by prioritizing. A plan to monitor and communicate comprehensive information regarding student learning and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders was a concern for parents and stakeholders. Stakeholders indicated that leaders monitor some information about student learning conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals. They also revealed that leaders sometimes communicate results to stakeholders

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

The instrument used for these observations is a school improvement resource to conduct observations for the purpose of creating the most optimal environments in which students can learn. The reason for the shift from a focus on teachers to a focus on learners is to ensure that learners are engaging, acting, reacting, and benefiting

from various contexts or environments that should be evident in all effective learning settings. Learning environments are typically constructivist in nature, engaging learners in "sense-making" or reasoning about extensive resource sets. The team observed students engaged in environments conducive to learning that focused on a number of important themes including equity, high expectations, support of learning, active learning, progress monitoring and provision of feedback, well-managed, and digital from which evidence was collected. All of the constructs within the overall learning environment were rated on the following scale: one (1) not observed, two (2) somewhat evident, three (3) evident, and four (4) very evident. The team reports that the school features some current hardware, but the overall infrastructure is an issue. Additionally, the team noted that teachers were not consistently and effectively using technology to empower students for success in life, service, and leadership. The team observed some low level teacher-centered activities such as answering questions, drill and practice, and academic games. Limited use of technology as a teaching tool or use by students as a learning tool was observed.

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 criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED is introducing a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduces an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; 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.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and Indicators; the Analysis of Student Performance; and the Engagement and Involvement of Stakeholders. Within each domain, institutions will be able to 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 can be a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Required Action as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected Indicator.

The IEQ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. Your institution's IEQ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Your actions for improvement that have a positive impact will be reflected in your IEQ score.

IEQ Institutional Score: 238

Teaching and Learning Impact: 257

(Standards 3 and 5; Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 218

(Standards 1 and 2; Stakeholder Engagement Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 214

(Standard 4)

Carver School of Health Sciences and Research is a progressive school and is constantly seeking ways to address

the needs of its students. The External Review Team extends sincere appreciation to the staff and stakeholders for their hospitality, support, and professionalism demonstrated before and during the review. The team also acknowledges and applauds the school staff for the efforts they have employed to improve the quality of educational programs and offers congratulations for the progress made towards maintaining school accreditation as a quality school. Therefore, the External Review Team recommends Carver School of Health Sciences and Research for a new five-year term of accreditation by the Advanc-ED Accreditation Commission.

Improvement Priority

1. Develop and Implement a school safety plan that include goals that are specific, measureable, attainable, relevant, and time bound.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

4.3 The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.

Description:

A recurring concern gleaned from staff and student interviews was the need to feel safe in the school. This is due to easy accessibility to the school. The concern stems from the lack of windows in certain areas and the need to open doors while not being able to see who is on the opposite side of the door. Additionally, another concern is the amount of traffic that enters the school at the conclusion of the school day from several locations outside of the building.

A safety plan to address school accessibility from the outside would provide an environment that promotes safety for staff and students.

2. Develop and implement a comprehensive technology action plan to address technology needs, professional development, and protocol to ensure the plan is shared with all stakeholders.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

4.5 The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.

Description:

It was evident through observations and interviews that technology and technology usage in classrooms varied. Train the staff to use available technology so that instruction may be enhanced. The school has limited technology, including computers, electronic white boards, and nooks. Students would readily engage the technology and the instructional process could be strengthened by its use. It would also be a valuable tool for teachers as they undertake the use of data and results to inform instruction.

To be successful in a global society, students require state-of-the-art technology to facilitate and expand their educational experiences. A comprehensive technology plan that outlines specific needs for the school and identifies both private and public funding sources will provide strong guidance for upgrading the technology and providing greater success for students to compete in their 21 century society.

3. Develop, implement, and evaluate structures that provide long-term interaction with individual students that build strong relationships over time with the students and adults in the school.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

3.9 The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.

Description:

Interviews with parents, students, staff, and observations revealed that a culture should be established to allow every student to be known by at least one adult who supports that student's educational needs. The size of the school and the small number of students create an ideal situation to address this concern. These structures should allow school personnel to gain significant insight into each student and serve as an advocate for students' needs relative to learning, thinking, and life skills. Annual evaluation of these structures is critical to ensure stated goals and objectives are being achieved.

Students should know that there are caring adults to whom they can turn when they have questions, concerns, or major issues at school or home.

Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:

Dr. Robert L Gilbert

Team Member:

Dr. Octavius L. Mulligan

Mrs. Nikkita Davenport Warfield

Dr. Zke Zimmerman

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. 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 complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that confers accreditation upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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 joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, these divisions share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

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Report of the
External Review
for
Carver School of Technology

55 McDonough Blvd. SE

Atlanta, GA, 30315
US

Mr. Jason J Stamper, Principal

Date: April 23, 2014 - April 24, 2014



North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

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Introduction to the External Review

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of student performance or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, as well as evaluations of Student Performance, the Learning Environment, Stakeholder Feedback and Assurances.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. Before implementation, the standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains a detailed evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, identification of Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards (if appropriate), and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review team.

The AdvancED Standards and Indicators are the first of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Using indicator-specific performance levels, the External Review Team evaluates the degree to which the institution meets each indicator on a scale of 1 to 4. The scores assigned to the indicators are averaged to arrive at a single score. This score, along with scores from evaluations of student performance and stakeholder feedback, will be used to determine the accreditation status of the institution.

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	2.21
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Standard 1: The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and 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 30,000 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.

Standard 1			
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Minutes from meetings related to development of the school's purpose • Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) • Interviews 	3.0
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the school's statement of purpose • Observations • Accreditation Report • The school vision and mission statements are not evident through out the school. 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school data profile• Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings• Accreditation Report• The school continuous improvement plan	2.0

Standard 2: The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 2			
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student handbooks • Governing body policies, procedures, and practices • Staff handbooks • Accreditation Report • Interviews • School handbooks 	3.0
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Communications about program regulations 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School improvement plan developed by the school • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	2.0
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	3.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes from meetings with stakeholders • Accreditation Report 	2.0
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice and student success noted 	3.0

Standard 3: The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student 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 to 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.

Standard 3			
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school'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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Accreditation Report • ELEOT observations 	2.0
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Common assessments • Curriculum writing process • Accreditation Report 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource • Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool • Accreditation Report 	2.0
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books • Supervision and evaluation procedures • Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs • Accreditation Report 	3.0
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees • Interviews 	2.0
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Web design class used examples of exemplars. (QR codes) 	2.0
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report 	2.0
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days • Accreditation Report 	2.0
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Observations • Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices • Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting 	3.0
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of evaluation of professional learning program. • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Observations 	2.0
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • List of learning support services and student population served by such services • Accreditation Report 	2.0

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. Determine the focus for professional learning and ensure that all staff commit to participation.

3.3

The team noted that many opportunities for professional learning have been made available; however, the learning strategies provided from these sessions should be used in the classrooms and monitored. A systematic process should be developed for a continuous cycle of improvement, as classroom observations revealed that strategies had not been systemically implemented. Leadership team and support staff (coaches) should narrow and develop the process of professional learning that is focused on specific strategies. Additionally, the leadership team and support staff should develop individual roles and responsibilities.

The use of best practices gleaned from professional learning will improve student learning.

Standard 4: The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

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 30,000 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. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • School budgets for the last three years • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	2.0
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • School schedule • Interviews 	2.0
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Accreditation Report • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures. • Maintenance schedules 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Data on media and information resources available to students and staff • Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information 	2.0
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure • Observations • Interviews 	2.0
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Interviews • List of support services available to students 	2.0
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Accreditation Report • Description of IEP process • Interviews • Description of referral process 	2.0

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. There are many opportunities for subgroups to be mentored, nurtured, and counseled.

4.6

The school offers a variety of clubs, including Men of Action, Velocity, Men of Ambition, Girls Achieving Through Technology, and many more. Through observations and interviews, the team noted that all students are known by the entire staff and faculty. Monitoring, offering and allowing students many opportunities to come after school and on Saturdays should be celebrated and continued.

The provision of a variety of student support services enhances opportunities for students to become successful.

Standard 5: The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Systems 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.

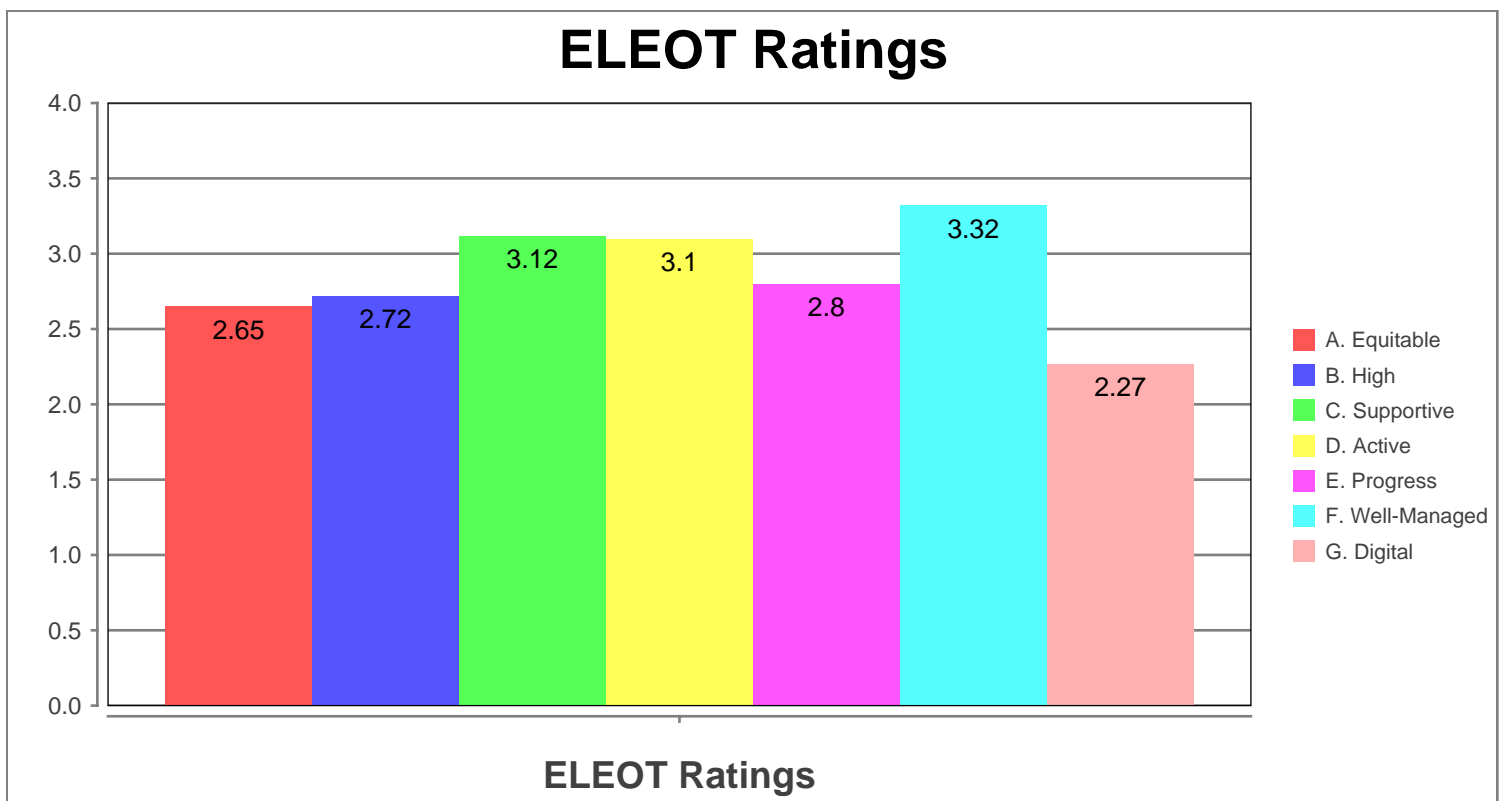
Standard 5			
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols • Observations • Interviews • Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance • The school has been planning, but have not set forth a system to monitor and evaluate the plan. 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	2.0
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Documentation of attendance and training related to data use • Accreditation Report 	2.0
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	2.0
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	2.0

Learning Environment

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. External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.



Student Performance

Student Performance on assessments is the second of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze student performance data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the assessments used by the institution, the degree to which the institution properly administered the assessments, analyzed and acted on the results, and the overall performance of students using a set of rubrics. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Student Performance Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Assessment Quality	2.0
Test Administration	3.0
Quality of Learning	2.0
Equity of Learning	3.0

Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys are directly correlated to the AdvancED Accreditation 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 and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Stakeholder Feedback Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Questionnaire Administration	3.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.0

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

The External Review was conducted on April 23-24, 2014. A team of 4 professional educators, including a Lead Evaluator, conducted the review. Although those who were interviewed were open and honest in their responses to questions, the school was not prepared for the review. After interviews of school level personnel, the team determined that there was a disconnect of expectations prior to the AdvancED review from the system and the school.

The school was open to directions from the Lead Evaluator. The school leadership team stated they did not receive information from the district in a timely manner; thus, the Lead Evaluator had to provide specific information such as schedules and documents needed for review in order for the school to be prepared. The school was helpful and provided additional documentation and information upon request. The team arrived on a Sunday afternoon to begin a work session and the materials were not available at the hotel as we had been requested. As the team reviewed materials at the school and interviewed stakeholders, it was determined that the school was willing to do whatever was necessary to make the review successful.

A total of 37 stakeholders were interviewed, including 12 students, 2 administrators, 7 leadership team members, 1 community member, 5 support staff, and 7 teachers.

The review ended after three days and lots of discussion and deliberation from the team members as well as the school.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

The school used AdvancED Standards 1 and 2 as a springboard to help begin the planning process. The new administration has embraced the challenge of knowing there is much work to do. Many initiatives have been established, but are still in the planning stages. The staff worked together to provide dialogue about teaching strategies intended to produce practices to inform instruction and impact student achievement. However, a clear and concise application of a technology plan is not apparent. The school needs real time support and access to technology requests. The school needs the equipment for technology to be called a School of Technology. The team reviewed documents that indicated equipment had been ordered, but the ordered had not been delivered.

The team noted through observations, interviews, and artifacts that a planning process is in place, but the action steps and follow through are lacking. A common theme that emerged was a strong desire to focus on students. This was noted as the team observed and noted the reaction of teachers and staff members. Team members found this to be a sign of a student-focused culture.

As the team interviewed faculty and staff, it was noted that there was a lack of roles and responsibilities for administrators. A definite plan of what the expectations are for each department is needed. The leadership team conducts many activities such as professional learning and clubs, but the efforts are not coordinated and evaluated. This lack of attention to essential components of continuous quality improvement weakens improvement outcomes.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

Over all, students were well-behaved. The environment was very conducive to learning and the majority of teachers were technologically limited in their instruction. Teaching skills learned from professional learning opportunities (as indicated in the professional learning plan) were not demonstrated and observed. Exceptional instruction in some rooms was noted; however, overall instruction throughout the building and total engagement of the students was marginal. The school's leadership team stated that weekly professional learning strategies had been provided and should be seen in the classrooms. Evidence of this professional learning was not observed by the team.

ELEOT Ratings: (highest to lowest)

- 3.32 Well-managed
- 3.12 Supportive
- 3.1 Active
- 2.8 Progress
- 2.72 High Expectations
- 2.65 Equitable
- 2.27 Digital

Students were well-behaved and the team noted this in hallways, classrooms, and the cafeteria setting. Teachers provided support to students, as noted by the observations. A few classes were very active and engaging, but this was not pervasive. The team noted the main concern as being the lack of digital learning. Some classrooms utilized digital technology, but this too was not consistent through our the building. The school must focus on the use of digital learning as a priority in the future.

The team found all school faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders open, hospitable, and willing to assist in any manner. All have great plans for improving the school, but action plans and support need to be clearly defined, implemented, and evaluated. In order for all stakeholders to secure the initiatives for student learning, there must be a collaboration between the school and district.

The school has many plans, but appears not to have a follow up plan in place. Staff and faculty must focus on the two or three items that will or may increase student learning and remain committed to those efforts with fidelity. Many opportunities for professional learning have been made available, but fail to provide time for implementation

and evaluation before moving to another topic. The school needs to use data from this year and begin a comprehensive planning progress that is focused for student achievement.

The school should use these scores to help guide the planning process and focus the school for student learning and achievement.

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 criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED is introducing a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduces an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; 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.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and Indicators; the Analysis of Student Performance; and the Engagement and Involvement of Stakeholders. Within each domain institutions will be able to 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 can be a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Required Action as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected Indicator.

The IEQ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. Your institution's IEQ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Your actions for improvement that have a positive impact will be reflected in your IEQ score.

Calculations for IEQ Schools:

Index of Quality Score: 228

Teaching and Learning Impact: 219

Leadership and Governance: 255

Resource Allocation: 214

The team appreciates the school's willingness to learn from the AdvancED process. The team recommends that the Carver School of Technology be granted accreditation for the next five years.

Improvement Priority

1. Evaluate and designate the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team and support staff (academic coaches).

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

2.2 The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.

Description:

Stakeholder interviews revealed a strong desire for the stability of the administration and the provision of clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The school does not have control over the naming of the principal; however, the school must develop clearly communicated roles and responsibilities for all administrators. During the past three years, the school has had three different principals. Currently, the school has an interim principal.

Administrative functions can be conducted more effectively when there is clarity about roles and responsibilities.

2. Prioritize, evaluate, and implement a technology plan that permeates throughout the school.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

4.5 The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.

Description:

Through student interviews and observations, the team noted that a need for more technological experiences in classrooms as well as outside classrooms (field trips, technology conferences, work place, and on and off campus.)

The faculty and staff must designate a focused technology plan in order to prepare students with technology as well as improve student achievement. The school is based on the mission and vision of the 21st century, technology-rich environment.

The provision of more opportunities for students to utilize technology will ultimately fulfill the mission and vision of the school.

Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:

Dr. Mary Jacobs

Team Member:

Mr. Charlie Bryant

Mrs. Ashante Everett

Dr. Charles K Kenneth Maxwell

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. 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 complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that confers accreditation upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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 joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, these divisions share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

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Report of the
External Review
for
Carver School of the Arts

55 McDonough Blvd SE
Atlanta, GA, 30315-2316
US

Dr. Marvin A Pryor, Principal

Date: April 23, 2014 - April 24, 2014



North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

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Introduction to the External Review

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of student performance or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, as well as evaluations of Student Performance, the Learning Environment, Stakeholder Feedback and Assurances.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. Before implementation, the standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains a detailed evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, identification of Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards (if appropriate), and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review team.

The AdvancED Standards and Indicators are the first of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Using indicator-specific performance levels, the External Review Team evaluates the degree to which the institution meets each indicator on a scale of 1 to 4. The scores assigned to the indicators are averaged to arrive at a single score. This score, along with scores from evaluations of student performance and stakeholder feedback, will be used to determine the accreditation status of the institution.

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	2.7
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Standard 1: The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and 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 30,000 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.

Standard 1			
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Interviews • Purpose statements - past and present 	2.0
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Survey results • The school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report 	2.0
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • The school data profile • Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings • Interviews • Accreditation Report • The school continuous improvement plan 	2.0

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Seek, explore and implement additional strategies to increase rigor and improve pedagogy.

1.3

Interviews of stakeholders, classroom observations and data reveal the need for an increase in rigorous instruction. It is necessary to improve rigor by addressing higher order thinking skills and the process used to structure instructional programs.

Standard 2: The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 2			
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Student handbooks • Governing body policies, procedures, and practices • Staff handbooks • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions • School handbooks 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Governing body minutes relating to training • Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest • Assurances, certifications • Interviews • Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies • Communications about program regulations • Observations • Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest • Governing code of ethics 	3.0
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of school leadership • School improvement plan developed by the school • Accreditation Report • Survey results regarding functions of the governing body • Observations • Agendas and minutes of meetings • Interviews 	3.0
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Observations • Interviews • Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report • Examples of decisions in support of the school's continuous improvement plan 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes from meetings with stakeholders • Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys • Survey responses • Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan • Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews 	2.0
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation • Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation • Observations • Job specific criteria • Interviews 	3.0

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. Develop a plan for instructional collaboration through common planning times and across subject areas.

2.4

Although there is evidence that collaboration is happening informally, rigorous instruction infused with the arts would be improved if teachers collaborated more systematically. This collaboration should include teaching methods as well as content, using the various art forms as examples in the other subject areas.

Standard 3: The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student 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 to 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.

Standard 3
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school'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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Lesson plans • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Posted learning objectives • Representative samples of student work across courses • Course schedules • Course descriptions • Observations • Descriptions of instructional techniques 	3.0
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum guides • Observations • Surveys results • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps • Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum 	2.0
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher evaluation criteria • Agenda items addressing these strategies • Professional development focused on these strategies • Interviews • Observations • Surveys results • Accreditation Report 	2.0
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum maps • Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books • Supervision and evaluation procedures • Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions • Observations • Surveys results • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees • Survey results • Observations • Interviews 	2.0
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning 	3.0
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Observations • Survey results • Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff • Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices • Interviews 	3.0
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days • Accreditation Report 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of students matched to adult advocate • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Interviews • Observations • Curriculum and activities of formal adult advocate structure • Master schedule with time for formal adult advocate structure • Description of formal adult advocate structures 	4.0
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Observations • Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices • Survey results • Sample report cards for each grade level and for all courses • Interviews • Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting • Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting 	3.0
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Survey results • Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs • Accreditation Report • Observations 	2.0
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Data used to identify unique learning needs of students 	3.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.

3.9

Teachers, staff, and school leadership leverage the small school concept to provide their students with adult advocates in the form of teacher advisers. All students are enrolled in an advisory program designed to allow teachers and students to develop long term relationships that benefit students throughout their academic career. Students meet in advisory groups daily to learn study skills, college/career preparation, and complete course registration activities. Students have the opportunity throughout their education to experience positive role models through a variety of school sponsored activities.

The teacher advocate is a critical aspect to the success of the student. The student advocate acts not only in an academic oversight capacity, but also functions as a parent-school liaison, a mentor, and often an insulating barrier between the student and external distractions that might otherwise jeopardize the student's potential for success.

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Develop a plan for teachers to participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.

3.5

While there is evidence that some collaborative learning is taking place among the teachers in the school, there is no formalized process of collaborative learning. Teachers need to have a defined collaborative process with specific goals, methods, desired outcomes, and quantitative measurements to guide their collaborative efforts in order to ensure fidelity to the instructional process.

Instructional practices and curriculum benefit greatly from collaborative learning communities that have a focused purpose.

2. Develop a plan for teachers and school leaders to monitor curriculum, instruction, and assessment systematically and make adjustments in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning.

3.2

The school leadership has in place policies for monitoring student data in curriculum and instruction; however it appears the analysis of individual student assessment data is somewhat limited. In addition, while there is some evidence of student achievement such as the GHSGWT pass rate, other areas such as Math II, Economics, History, and Biology have had limited success and in some cases, demonstrated negative achievement trends. The negative trend data suggest that data analysis has not been effectively utilized in some areas of instruction.

In order to implement effective curriculum adjustments, data from a variety of formative diagnostic assessment tools must be utilized throughout the instructional process.

Standard 4: The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

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 30,000 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. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff • Accreditation Report • Assessments of staffing needs • Documentation of highly qualified staff 	3.0
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • Survey results • School schedule • Interviews • Observations • School calendar 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures. • System for maintenance requests 	4.0
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Budget related to media and information resource acquisition • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Observations • Data on media and information resources available to students and staff • Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information 	3.0
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews 	2.0
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student assessment system for identifying student needs • Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Interviews • List of support services available to students • Observations 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Observations • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning • Description of IEP process • Interviews • Description of referral process 	3.0

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. In spite of some socio-economic challenges, administration and staff have created a warm, nurturing environment to address student learning and their psychological needs.

4.3

Through interviews of all levels of stakeholders and observations, it is readily apparent that administration and staff care for both the academic progress and overall well-being of the entire student population. Informal mentoring has proved very effective in this small learning community model. Even with a new head counselor to the school, the support services are well coordinated with colleagues (e.g., social worker, lead teacher for Special Education, etc.). The school's administration should be commended because safe building operations require coordination with three other administration teams.

In order to push for maximum academic growth for college/career readiness, basic needs of learners must be monitored and addressed. Against the backdrop of some urban challenges, the procedures in place are very capable of handling a wide array of challenges that may arise.

2. Between effective blending of veteran staff and a new head counselor, the school has both informal and formal procedures to determine and address a wide range of student needs.

4.6

Through interviews of all levels of stakeholders and personal observations, the level of care and empathy for the students was excellent. The formal processes through the counseling department, social worker, lead teacher for Special Education, etc. shows a real attention to detail. The small learning community creates a close-knit feeling. All faculty and staff are dedicated to the students' well-being, socio-emotional growth, and academic success.

By attending to these basic needs, this clears the path for academic learning and further discussions about future life goals to authentically take place. By feeling supported, students will thrive in the environment you have in place.

Standard 5: The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Systems 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 5			
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance • Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free 	3.0

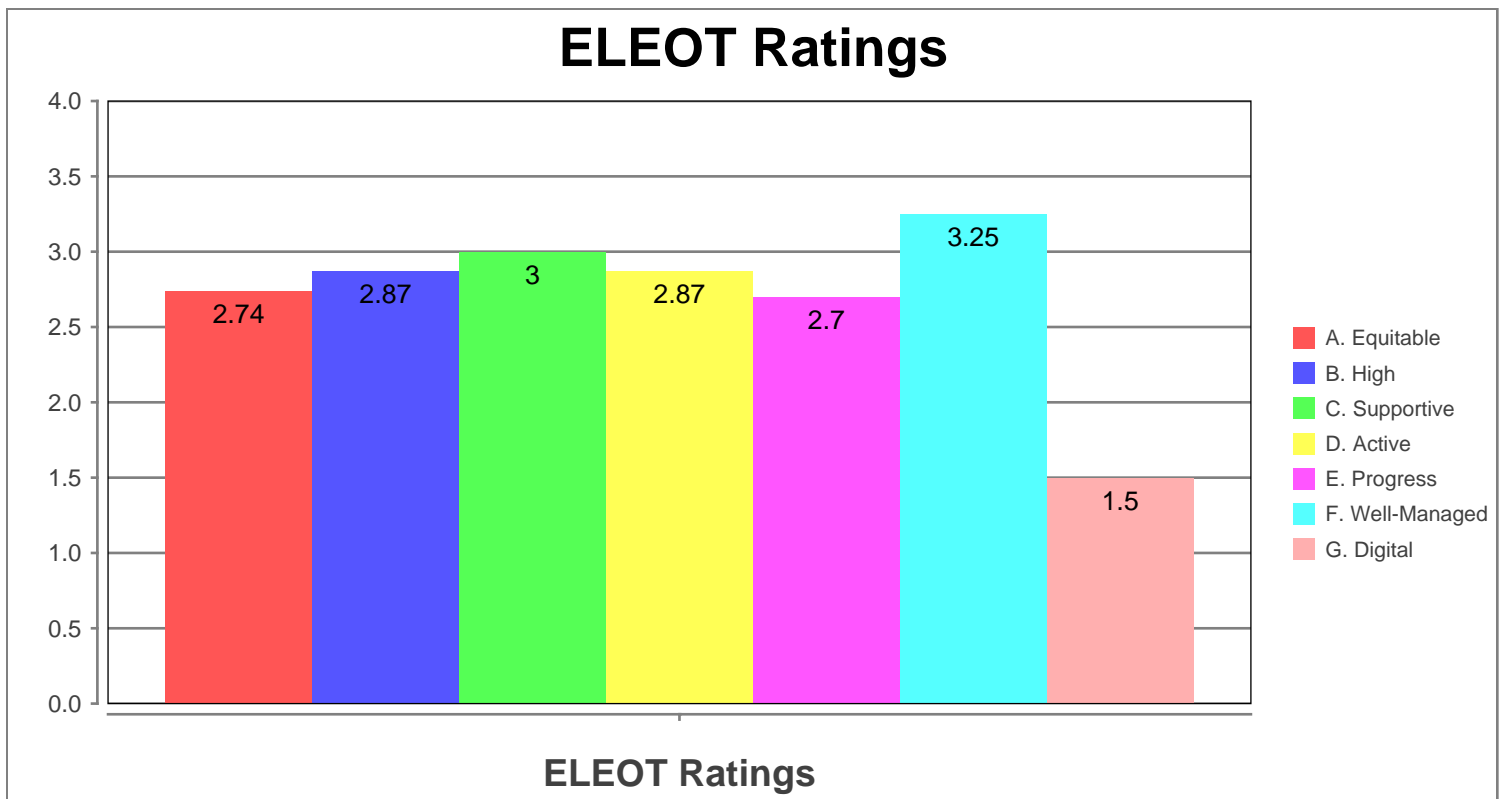
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Interviews • Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning • Observations • List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning • Accreditation Report 	3.0
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Survey results • Observations • Accreditation Report 	1.0
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student surveys • Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning • Accreditation Report • Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans • Evidence of student readiness for the next level • Evidence of student growth • Observations • Evidence of student success at the next level • Interviews 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals • Accreditation Report • School quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, conditions that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals • Interviews 	3.0

Learning Environment

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. External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.



Student Performance

Student Performance on assessments is the second of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze student performance data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the assessments used by the institution, the degree to which the institution properly administered the assessments, analyzed and acted on the results, and the overall performance of students using a set of rubrics. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Student Performance Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Assessment Quality	4.0
Test Administration	4.0
Quality of Learning	4.0
Equity of Learning	3.0

Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys are directly correlated to the AdvancED Accreditation 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 and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Stakeholder Feedback Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Questionnaire Administration	3.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.0

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

During the off-site review, the Lead Evaluator met with the school's principal to gain insight on the day-to-day operations of the school and to tour the facility. The Lead Evaluator visited the school on two occasions to meet with members of the internal committee to discuss the required documentation and preparation for the visit. One week prior to the review, the Lead Evaluator conducted a telephone conference with the principals. The AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. The team reviewed the Assurances, the Executive Summary, the Self Assessment, and the Student Performance Diagnostic. Prior to the official visit, the team met and discussed the information received from the school and the final submitted document, the Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic.

The External Review was conducted April 23-24, 2014. The team was comprised of a Lead Evaluator and three other professionals. The team discussed ideas and information gained from the data received. There were items that were not readily available, but when requested the school was able to secure those items.

The External Review team listened to presentations from the principal and staff where they described an overview of the school as it related to the AdvancED Standards. The principal profiled the school by presenting its longitudinal assessments results. The results were mixed; however, the principal indicated the following: 100% of the students passed the Georgia High School Writing Test; Carver School of the Arts exceeded the system in the percent of students passing the American Literature End of Course Test; and challenges remain in the areas of mathematics and the percent of students scoring a three or above on the Advance Placement Exams.

Throughout the visit Carver School of the Arts (CSOTA) responded to all of the team's queries and requests. The External Review team interviewed 59 stakeholders, which included 1 administrator, 26 teachers, 3 support staff, 24 students, and 5 parents.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

Prior to the first day of the review, the External Review team reviewed the Accreditation Report and the Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic. During the on-site review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from classroom observations, and conducted interviews.

As the team reviewed the artifacts and engaged in discussions/interviews with stakeholders, several overarching themes emerged:

The overarching themes included the following: all members of the school leadership team are actively engaged with students and encourage their performance; the school policies provide effective administration, providing a sense of community among the stakeholders; the small learning community coupled with compassionate staff supports students well in the face of great socio-economic challenges; and CSOTA is at a crossroads with respect to their identity.

Although students were actively engaged in the learning process, the presence of rigor was sporadic. The school should continue to seek ways to increase rigor and improve pedagogy. This will also be an opportunity to further demonstrate the school's compliance with the intent of Indicator 1.3. This indicator challenges the school to support rigorous and equitable educational programs, and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and the development of life skills. In some classes the level of rigor was quite high, while in others it was difficult to observe. The school should encourage all teachers to engage students in the learning process by providing challenging learning experiences that require students to use higher level skills such as collaboration, analysis, integration, and application.

The school might approach increasing rigor in instruction by formally examining the pedagogy of the school, minimizing and/or discontinuing those practices that do not lend themselves to rigorous instruction, and focusing professional learning on best practices that will hone teachers' skill sets around increasing rigor in instruction.

Informal processes of collaboration and data analysis have the school moving in the right direction. While there is some anecdotal evidence of collaborative instructional planning, the school should develop a formal process in which teachers regularly participate in collaborative professional learning communities. Formalizing these opportunities with monitoring and oversight will strengthen student learning and teacher growth. The school could use these professional learning communities to address data analysis, instructional practices, and differentiated instruction.

The school does not currently have a formal process in place to annually review and/or revise its mission and vision. Having a formal process will ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to verbally express their ideas, suggestions, and support for the direction of the school. The team noted that the culture of the school has dramatically changed since the mission and vision were created. The underlying issues in every AdvancED Standard are aligned to the lack of reviewing the purpose and direction for the school. Some stakeholders are working towards the 2005 purpose while others are aligning their practices with the new culture of the school.

Interviews reveal that some of the stakeholders would like for the school to revisit the mission/vision of the school because they would like to continue some of the practices and procedures of the past. Formally reviewing the mission and vision on a continual basis would support the school's desire to continue to use the student audition process. The stakeholders reveal that there is a need to audition students prior to entering the program or when students are enrolled in order to place students in an area that best meets the artistic ability of the students.

Students, teachers, and stakeholders expressed that there were few opportunities to explore the cultural resources that exist within the community. The school should explore more ways to use existing partnerships and form new relationships with cultural institutions in the immediate area. Furthermore, the school should provide more opportunities for students to experience the artistic and cultural diversity found within the community.

The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students. CSOTA works diligently with the Atlanta Public Schools' (APS) Human Resources Department to staff the building with highly qualified personnel. To improve graduation rates, there has been a renewed emphasis on academics which is reflected in master scheduling.

The two strongest indicators (4.3 and 4.6) involve providing a safe and healthy learning environment, as well as offering the wide array of support services needed to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population. With socio-economic challenges and fiscal barriers, CSOTA has done a great job creating a nurturing learning environment. The faculty and staff are always willing to mentor and go above and beyond to support the whole child. The collaboration between administration, counseling, support services, and staff is to be commended. In order to have a smooth running school with respect to traffic flow and emergency procedures, the administration coordinates their efforts well with the other three campuses on site.

The lagging indicator within Standard 4, fortunately, shows potential avenues for improvement on the immediate horizon. With the addition of a new computer lab soon, the technological infrastructure that supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational endeavors will be getting a much needed boost. It should be noted that its integration into the life of school would be better served with a technology plan, needs assessment analysis, etc. Possible ways to shore up this deficit even further could include closer coordination with APS's Office of Federal Programs, grant writing initiatives, and cultivating business partners in education.

In the end, students with basic needs being regularly met who feel safe and valued by school staff are going to perform at higher levels. CSOTA has created a culture that is student-centered and an environment that is geared towards their growth. With technological upgrades properly applied, this and other standards would rise and, more importantly, students would be 21st Century college/career ready.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of learning that took place classified around seven learning environments, which includes: Equity, High Expectations, Support, Engagement, Progress Monitoring and Feedback, Management, and Digital Environment.

A total of 26 classrooms were observed for a minimum of 20 minutes each during the review. All learning environments were rated from a low of 2.74 to a high of 3.25. The exception was the use of technology (digital learning), which had a rating of 1.5. The team noted that there was not adequate access to technology to promote higher order thinking.

During classroom observations, there was little evidence of differentiated learning. It was noted through observations and interviews that after school tutorials and remediation are offered to meet the needs of struggling students. In order to support the achievement goals of all students, teachers should provide a more personalized

learning experience for each student by using a variety of learning opportunities that meet the individual student needs.

The External Review team began its work by meeting to discuss work that had been completed prior to the visit. The team interviewed 59 stakeholders and observed 26 classrooms to gain additional insight and perceptions of stakeholders regarding the school's adherence to the AdvancED Standards and the effectiveness of the system in meeting its mission and continuous improvement goals. The school was helpful in getting additional information for the team when needed. The team thanks the principal and instructional coach for their leadership and for everything they did to make the team feel welcome. The school's staff should be commended for their kind words and willingness to assist the team with all requests.

The Executive Director of the Southern Region is dedicated to the New Schools of the Carver. Her participation in the evening events with the review team is worthy of praise.

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 criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED is introducing a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduces an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; 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.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and Indicators; the Analysis of Student Performance; and the Engagement and Involvement of Stakeholders. Within each domain institutions will be able to 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 can be a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Required Action as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected Indicator.

The IEQ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. Your institution's IEQ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Your actions for improvement that have a positive impact will be reflected in your IEQ score.

IEQ Institutional Score: 282

Teaching and Learning Impact: 290
(Standards 3 and 5; Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 255

(Standards 1 and 2; Stakeholder Engagement Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 300

(Standard 4)

The External Review team recommends that Carver School of the Arts be accredited by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission for a five-year term of accreditation.

Improvement Priority

1. Develop and implement a plan for a systemic professional development program that will provide teachers with strategies for analyzing student data and developing lessons to meet each child's needs.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

5.3 Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.

Description:

Teachers and administrators stated in interviews that data are analyzed, but the team failed to observe evidence of a formalized process for analyzing data on the student level.

When teachers are provided professional development in analyzing data basing instruction on standards, learning opportunities for students are enhanced.

2. Develop and implement a plan to increase parental involvement through community outreach efforts, parent volunteer programs, parenting classes, and/or parent-teacher conferences.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

2.5 Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.

Description:

During interviews, teachers, administrators, and parents expressed a need for increased parental involvement. Increased parental involvement will provide diverse ideas for improving the school. Students whose parents are involved in their school tend to be more serious about their schoolwork, and therefore higher achievers.

3. Develop and implement a plan/schedule for the annual review of the school's mission and vision and use stakeholder meetings to glean input in the review process.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

1.1 The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.

Description:

Interviews and the lack of documentation indicate that the school does not have an established time for its annual review of its purpose and direction. It was noted that the school has not revisited the mission statement since 2005.

Reviewing the purpose and direction of the school is imperative in order to ensure that all stakeholders have input and understanding of the major focus areas of the school. This will ensure that there is a clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.

4. Develop and implement a technology plan to generate a list prioritizing needed items to enhance teaching and learning.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

4.5 The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.

Description:

Through interviews and site inspection, there is a noticeable lack of technology. There is one iPad cart for the entire building and even some more basic technology (e.g., calculators) is not in sufficient supply. A new computer lab that is planned to be installed in the future. Administration and concerned stakeholders should monitor its completion process to ensure this much-needed component is in place.

It is vital to have modern technology in place for student use. This may be some students only exposure to such devices and software. The benefits would be enhanced teaching practices resulting in deeper student learning. The quality and diversity of student work products would reflect higher order thinking in a creative way, whether an artistic endeavor or core content project. Furthermore, this would be aligned with 21st Century literacy and job skills.

Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:

Ms. Monika M Wiley

Team Member:

Mr. Kenny Childs

Mr. Edward Conner

Mrs. Jamey Wood

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. 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 complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that confers accreditation upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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 joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, these divisions share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

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External Review

Coretta Scott King YWLA High School

Atlanta Public Schools

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Date: February 5, 2013 - February 6, 2013

External Review

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Introduction to the External Review Process

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards, but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It also includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, observations of the Learning Environment, as well as Required Actions.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. The standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains an evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, conclusions concerning Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards, and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review Team. Indicators are evaluated and rated individually by the External Review Team using a four-level performance rubric. The Standard Performance Level is the average of indicator scores for the standard.

Standard 1: Purpose and Direction

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 own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the institutions' vision that is supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.		3.33	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Minutes from meetings related to development of the school's purpose •Survey results •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Documentation or description of the process for creating the school's purpose including the role of stakeholders •Purpose statements - past and present •Planning protocols 	4
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the school's statement of purpose •Survey results •The school's statement of purpose •Minutes from stakeholder meetings 	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•The school data profile•Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings•Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders•The school continuous improvement plan	3

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. Utilizing the input of all stakeholders, the school conducted an exhaustive study of their purpose and direction that resulted in a focus on a robust school culture that prepares all students for post-secondary education.

1.1

The school's leadership team engaged a cross-section of stakeholders in a visioning process that led to honest and robust conversation about the school culture and instructional focus. Feedback from students, parents, employees, and community members was collected through a series of community and school meetings as well as surveys that will continue through an access link on the school's website. The process led to a decision by the school's leadership to focus on the school culture, research-based best practices, and a program of study to prepare students for post-secondary success.

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

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 school leadership research, Leithwood & 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 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 school communities to attain school 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 school 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 has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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		Standard Performance Level	
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.		3.0	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Student handbooks •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •Staff handbooks •Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions •School handbooks •District Strategic Plan 	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest •List of assigned staff for compliance •Proof of legal counsel •Assurances, certifications •Governing body training plan •Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies •Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest •Governing code of ethics 	3
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Roles and responsibilities of school leadership •School improvement plan developed by the school •Stakeholder input and feedback •Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation •Communications regarding board actions •Survey results regarding functions of the governing body •Agendas and minutes of meetings 	3
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of collaboration and shared leadership •Survey results •Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose •Examples of decisions in support of the school's continuous improvement plan 	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Minutes from meetings with stakeholders•Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys•Survey responses•Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan•Needs assesment	3
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation•Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation•Job specific criteria•Representative supervision and evaluation reports	3

Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning

A high-quality and effective 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 to 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, which include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The school'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 et al, 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 et al, 2008). According to Marks, Louis, & Printy (2002), school staff that engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, & Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective schools, "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 through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that 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.

Standard	Standard Performance Level
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.	2.92

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school'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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Lesson plans•Learning expectations for different courses•Posted learning objectives•Representative samples of student work across courses•Course schedules•Course descriptions•Stakeholder interviews	3
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum guides•Common assessments•Surveys results•Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps•Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum•Stakeholder interviews	3
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Teacher evaluation criteria•Agenda items addressing these strategies•Authentic assessments•Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource•Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool•Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge•Findings from supervisor walk-thrus and observations•Surveys results•Interdisciplinary projects	2

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum maps•Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books•Supervision and evaluation procedures•Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions•Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices•Surveys results•Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs•Stakeholder interviews	3
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of cross curricular projects, interdisciplinary instruction, and classroom action research project•Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees•Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings•Survey results•Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration	3
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance•Survey results•Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction•Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning	3
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Records of meetings and walk thru/feedback sessions•Survey results•Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices•Stakeholder interviews	2

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Volunteer program with variety of options for participation •List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days •Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress •Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process •Stakeholder interviews 	3
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •List of students matched to adult advocate •Survey results •Curriculum and activities of formal adult advocate structure •Master schedule with time for formal adult advocate structure •Description of formal adult advocate structures •Stakeholder interviews 	4
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Sample report cards for each grade level and for all courses •Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting •Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting 	3
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Crosswalk between professional learning and school purpose and direction •Stakeholder interviews 	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •List of learning support services and student population served by such services •Data used to identify unique learning needs of students 	3

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The school has a formal structure whereby each student is supported by a mentor/advocate.

3.9

School personnel take a proactive approach to ensure an advocate is in place for each young lady at the school. A well thought-out advocacy plan supports the building of foundational relationships whereby each student is known. The school-wide Intensive Care Unit, Instructional Focus Program, and Advisory Time provide the staff with significant insights into the students' lives and their primary needs. Additional support platforms such as the Tutorials and Saturday School afford the staff another opportunity to build strong relationships that can be long-term and impactful.

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems

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, 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 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staffs 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 to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.		3.43	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff •Assessments of staffing needs •Documentation of highly qualified staff •Allotment sheets 	4
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources •Survey results •School schedule •Alignment of budget with school purpose and direction •School calendar •Title One Plan 	4

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures.•System for maintenance requests•Maintenance schedules•Safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes	3
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Budget related to media and information resource acquisition•Data on media and information resources available to students and staff•Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information•Collection Analysis	4
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Policies relative to technology use•Classroom observations	3
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Student assessment system for identifying student needs•Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support•Survey results•Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills•Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education•List of support services available to students	3
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning•Survey results•Description of IEP process•Description of referral process	3

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The school utilizes a comprehensive interviewing and hiring process to identify teacher candidates who are committed to the success of a single-gender school.

4.1

The principal is provided an instructional allotment in the spring of each school year. The instructional allotment reflects projected staffing for the upcoming fiscal year. Vacant positions created through transfers, attrition, or resignations are filled using a process defined by the principal. Once an applicant completes an electronic application and meets requirements established by the Department of Human Resources, the principal uses a rigorous interviewing process in her efforts to hire the best teachers for her students. Applicants participate in a formal, systemic process that consists of a panel interview, portfolio presentation, and lesson demonstration using a sample lesson plan. In addition, students have benefited from the allocation of a media specialist during the 2012-2013 school year.

2. Administrators and staff not only utilize district resources to support teaching and learning, but also actively seek and are awarded partnerships and grants in support of their students.

4.2

Instructional and fiscal resources identified in the master schedule, Title I budget, and grant applications support the actions, strategies, and interventions identified in the Continuous Improvement Plan. Classroom resources demonstrate the efforts of the administration, teachers, and community members to secure partnerships and grants to increase access and equity to the instructional program that will better prepare students for post-secondary options. Ready access to a "Credit Recovery" program is evidence of additional resources provided to improve student achievement.

3. The media center is a hub of student learning with relevant and accessible materials to support student achievement.

4.4

The media center hosts a wide variety of materials and resources appropriate for the students of the school. The collection is current, engaging, and well-organized. Students and staff take advantage of a myriad of scheduling opportunities to use the center. The media specialist coordinates the integration of technology into classrooms school-wide. The vast amount of materials readily available for students is a rich resource to improve student achievement.

Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Systems with strong improvement processes are moving beyond anxiety about the current reality and focusing on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, that is, data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, & 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 (Dembo et al., 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 school 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).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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		Standard Performance Level	
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.		3.0	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols •Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance •Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free 	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Written protocols and procedures for data collection and analysis•Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning•List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning	2
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data•Documentation of attendance and training related to data use•Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data	3
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data•Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning•Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans•Evidence of student readiness for the next level•Evidence of student growth	3
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Communication plan regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders•Survey results•Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals•Stakeholder interviews	4

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The implementation of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) has provided an additional avenue to monitor student learning and ensure student success.

5.5

The school's use of the ICU program enables stakeholders to have weekly assessments of academic achievement. Individual teachers have the opportunity for recommendations regarding learning and/or behavioral strategies to assist the student. Parents are kept abreast of recommendations for their child and are notified of deficit areas and improvements. The communication, personalized attention, and collection of data through the ICU program provide an outstanding way to monitor and share comprehensive information on student achievement and school improvement goals.

Learning Environment

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. External review team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a 4 point scale with 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 7 learning environments included in ELEOT.

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool

<i>Environments</i>	<i>Level</i>
A. Equitable Learning Environment	2.5
B. High Expectations Environment	2.9000000953674316
C. Supportive Learning Environment	2.9000000953674316
D. Active Learning Environment	2.799999952316284
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	2.700000047683716
F. Well-Managed Learning Environment	2.9000000953674316
G. Digital Learning Environment	1.7000000476837158

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

The AdvancED external review for Coretta Scott King YWLA High School was conducted over a two-day period, February 5-6, 2013. The school was well-prepared for the review and transparent in its self-assessment and presentations. The administration, faculty, and staff members were eager for an open and honest appraisal of their work. The External Review Team interviewed forty-five individuals and observed in twenty-two classrooms. Stakeholders interviewed included students, parents, teachers, support staff, and community and business partners. Numerous artifacts were examined and reviewed and additional artifacts were provided upon request.

The External Review Team was welcomed and accommodated throughout the visit above and beyond expectations. Classrooms were accessible as scheduled and provided a rich observational experience. All artifacts were readily available and well-organized.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

Themes that emerged across all standards reflect the efforts on behalf of the staff to address the social, emotional, and educational needs of all students. Members of this staff demonstrate that they truly care about the success of the individual student. The Instructional Focus period, the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), and the mentoring/advocacy work done with each child are exceptional. The administration, faculty, and staff prioritize resources to impact students at their point of need. Faculty and staff provide support necessary to ensure student success.

Based upon interviews and artifact documentation, the practices that have been identified for required actions are in the beginning stages for this newly established school. There is a keen awareness among the leadership that these areas need to be addressed. This awareness is the important initial step to achieve success in these practices.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

The vision of the school is to have a rigorous instructional program that engages students in an environment of high expectations to prepare them for post-secondary options. However, while a well-managed environment with high expectations was evident in some classes observed, it was not pervasive

External Review

Coretta Scott King YWLA High School

throughout the building. Active student engagement is an area for growth, while maintaining high expectations for all students is another. The integration of technology as a learning tool in addition to a teaching and assessment tool is also an area for improvement.

While teachers have been provided professional learning for increased rigor, consistent application of higher order thinking activities was not evident. In order to provide the students the skills to become self-reliant, it is imperative that they are provided opportunities to think critically and have challenging experiences.

The External Review Team commends the faculty for their consistent use of curriculum, pacing guides, and three-part lesson plans. These foundational structures are necessary for students to achieve mastery of the Georgia Common Core Performance Standards. The team additionally commends the principal for her openness, her dedication to the school, and her vision and insight into the world of single-gender education. All stakeholders in independent interviews commended her leadership, her accessibility, and her focus for the students.

The External Review Team thanks the personnel of Coretta Scott King YWLA High School for their kindness, hospitality, and transparency throughout the visit. Much appreciation is given to the many staff members who assisted the team each day.

The AdvancED External Review Team recommends that Coretta Scott King Young Women's Leadership Academy High School be considered for accreditation by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

Required Actions

1. Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a new teacher induction program.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

3.7

Due to the opening of the school two and one-half years ago, the transfer of teachers, the hiring of new teachers, and leadership changes at the school, there is a need for a consistent and on-going teacher induction program. The uniqueness of a single-gender student body adds further emphasis to this action. An effective mentoring and induction program for new teachers will equip them for success in educating students at a single-gender school. Awareness of school policies, programs, and procedures is foundational to the success of new employees as they transition and will enable them to be in harmony with the school's values, beliefs, and mission.

2. Devise a process to frequently and efficiently collect, evaluate, and utilize all data to validate school-wide improvement efforts.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

5.2

The ability to properly monitor and continually improve student achievement and organizational programs is driven by data. Interviews, observations, and examination of artifacts demonstrated a wide range in utilization of data. The use of student achievement data was evident; however, the use of data from program evaluations was limited. An effective process should include an analysis of all data to include, but not limited to, formative and summative assessments, attendance data, behavioral infractions, and program evaluations. The consistent and comprehensive application of data-supported practices is key to school-wide improvement.

Addenda

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the Team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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, along with 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 (founded 1917) joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students. The Northwest Accreditation Commission joined the AdvancED network in 2011.

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Coretta Scott King YWLA High School

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

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External Review

Forrest Hill Academy

Atlanta Public Schools

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Date: May 14, 2013 - May 15, 2013

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Introduction to the External Review Process

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards, but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It also includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, observations of the Learning Environment, as well as Required Actions.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. The standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains an evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, conclusions concerning Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards, and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review Team. Indicators are evaluated and rated individually by the External Review Team using a four-level performance rubric. The Standard Performance Level is the average of indicator scores for the standard.

Standard 1: Purpose and Direction

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 own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the institutions' vision that is supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.		2.33	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Minutes from meetings related to development of the school's purpose •Survey results •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Documentation or description of the process for creating the school's purpose including the role of stakeholders •Purpose statements - past and present 	3
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the school's statement of purpose •Survey results •Accreditation Report 	2

External Review

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•The school continuous improvement plan•Short Term Action Plan (STAP) for Priority Schools	2

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

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 school leadership research, Leithwood & 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 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 school communities to attain school 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 school 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 has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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		Standard Performance Level	
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.		2.83	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Student handbooks •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •Staff handbooks •Accreditation Report •Interviews •Atlanta Public Schools Student Guide Book 	3

External Review

Forrest Hill Academy

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Governing body minutes relating to training•List of assigned staff for compliance•Proof of legal counsel•Assurances, certifications•Interviews•Governing body training plan•Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest•Governing code of ethics	3
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Roles and responsibilities of school leadership•School improvement plan developed by the school•Accreditation Report•Communications regarding board actions•Survey results regarding functions of the governing body•Agendas and minutes of meetings•Interviews	3
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of collaboration and shared leadership•Survey results•Interviews•Accreditation Report	3
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Minutes from meetings with stakeholders•Survey responses•Accreditation Report•Interviews	2

External Review

Forrest Hill Academy

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice and student success noted•Job specific criteria•Representative supervision and evaluation reports•Interviews	3

Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning

A high-quality and effective 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 to 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, which include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The school'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 et al, 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 et al, 2008). According to Marks, Louis, & Printy (2002), school staff that engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, & Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective schools, "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 through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that 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.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.		2.0	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school'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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lesson plans •Accreditation Report •Learning expectations for different courses •Posted learning objectives •Representative samples of student work across courses 	2

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum guides•Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps•Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum	2
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource•Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge•Accreditation Report•Interdisciplinary projects	2
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum maps•Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books•Accreditation Report	2
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees•Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings	2
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance•Accreditation Report•Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning	2
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Records of meetings and walk thrus/feedback sessions•Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff	2

External Review

Forrest Hill Academy

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days•Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress•Accreditation Report	2
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Master schedule with time for formal adult advocate structure	1
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices•Sample report cards for each grade level and for all courses•Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting•Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting	3
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs•Accreditation Report•Crosswalk between professional learning and school purpose and direction	2
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•List of learning support services and student population served by such services•Accreditation Report•Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning	2

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems

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, 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 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staffs 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 to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.		2.43	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •School budgets for the last three years •Survey results •Interviews •Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff •Accreditation Report •Documentation of highly qualified staff •Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines •Title 1A Budgets 	3
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Survey results •School schedule •Interviews •Alignment of budget with school purpose and direction •School calendar 	2

External Review

Forrest Hill Academy

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements•Accreditation Report•Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures.•Safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes•Arrival and dismissal scheule Internet Safety Training GEMA report	3
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Budget related to media and information resource acquisition•Accreditation Report•Survey results•Data on media and information resources available to students and staff•Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information•Media Center Brochure	3
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Policies relative to technology use	1
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support•Survey results•Accreditation Report•Interviews•List of support services available to students	3

External Review

Forrest Hill Academy

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning•Accreditation Report•Survey results•Description of IEP process•Description of referral process	2

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The design of the facility and the organizational structure of the school are highly conducive to community building.

4.3

Observations during the visit revealed the physical plant is actually divided into areas designated as communities. Each community has its own entry door, an open foyer, restroom facilities, classrooms for content instruction, and administrative office areas. Students are assigned to gender-based groups and rotate between the classrooms within their community. The design and organizational structure affords school staff members the opportunity to have direct and immediate interactions with students.

The presence of small learning communities intensifies and supports the acceleration of academic achievement as well as the development of appropriate social skills.

Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Systems with strong improvement processes are moving beyond anxiety about the current reality and focusing on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, that is, data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, & 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 (Dembo et al., 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 school 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).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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			Standard Performance Level
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			1.8
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Survey results •Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free •2012-2013 Testing Calendar 	2
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Accreditation Report •Continuous Improvement Plan 	2
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Interviews •Accreditation Report 	1

External Review

Forrest Hill Academy

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans•Evidence of student growth	2
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Accreditation Report	2

Learning Environment

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. External review team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a 4 point scale with 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 7 learning environments included in ELEOT.

ELEOT

<i>Environments</i>	<i>Level</i>
A. Equitable Learning Environment	1.97
B. High Expectations Environment	1.97
C. Supportive Learning Environment	2.13
D. Active Learning Environment	2.38
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	1.96
F. Well-Managed Learning Environment	2.21
G. Digital Learning Environment	1.16

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

The AdvancED External Review Team (ERT) for Forrest Hill Academy (FHA) began the on-site review process during its initial work session on May 13 and concluded with an exit report on May 15. Prior to arrival on the site, the four-person ERT had an opportunity to review the documentation provided to the team via the ASSIST platform and posted in the Team Workspace for ease of access. A pre-visit to the school district prior to the actual visit provided an opportunity to engage in focused conversations about the preparation for the team's visit, processes implemented in conducting the internal review, and the school's successes and challenges. Additionally, the pre-visit served as a first glimpse of the physical plant and the programs available to students enrolled at the school.

It was evident that the internal review process was conducted with transparency and integrity. Even though the process was completed during a time of challenge and change, school staff members developed a clear portrait of the school's level of adherence to the five AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools.

All of the school's internal review documents were compiled and submitted in a timely manner. Evidence and artifacts to support the self assessment were well organized, easily accessible, and aligned to the indicators for each standard. Information provided for review by team members was comprehensive and proved to be credible resources during team member work sessions and deliberations.

As part of the ERT's first work session, specific interview questions focused on the documents presented by the school were generated. During the visit, team members had the opportunity to engage in conversations with 38 stakeholders where the interview questions developed during the previous night's work session were presented. The interview groups consisted of three school administrators, 23 teachers and support staff, 1 parent, and 11 students. Stakeholders were vested in the accreditation process and spoke honestly as they reflected on the schools strengths, areas of needed improvement, and possible strategies that would support enhanced performance. Throughout the review, school leaders, staff members, students, and the one parent were found to be very open and sincere about their willingness to engage in work that will enhance the overall effectiveness of the school as it attempts to fulfill its purpose and direction.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

Emerging themes the team noted throughout the review process included the following:

- The numerous changes in leadership over the past years have caused concerns about stability and consistency in the school's purpose and direction. During mid-April, 2013, school staff members were introduced to their new principal. At the onset of the on site visit, the new principal had actually been in his position for 21 days. The previous principal had joined the staff in August 2011 in the capacity of administrator on special assignment. Stakeholders questioned if the constant changes in leadership might hamper attempts to accomplish the school's improvement goals as new leadership often comes in with different ideas for the school's direction. Students interviewed indicated they did not really know the principal and had not had a chance to meet him. The start date for the new administrator coincided with the beginning of administration of the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCTs) and the End of Course Tests (EOCTs). The ERT sensed a feeling of uneasiness about the constant leadership changes; however, staff members spoke highly in regards to the initial work of the new principal.

- School staff members participated in a visioning process where they collaboratively identified the guiding principles of the organization. Staff members spoke of mission and vision gatherings where they collaborated and reached consensus. The adopted statements are truly reflected of a solid focus for organizational effectiveness. Staff members indicated, these guiding principles help provide a sense of purpose and direction especially during times of change such as new leadership.

- The school size helps to enhance a spirit of family or belonging. Even though the student population at FHA is quite transient, classes observed during the visit tended to be relatively small. This fosters a sense of family among the students and the staff members. During one stakeholder interview session, a teacher remarked, "We look out for each other. We lean and depend on each other." However, even though caps have been established concerning maximum enrollment, information shared in the Self Assessment and during interviews indicated a concern about exceeding these caps based on students assigned by the district to the school.

- Shared leadership is clearly practiced utilizing an extensive roster of staff in place to support the academic, social, and emotional development of students. In addition to the principal and two assistant principals, leadership responsibilities are distributed among six implementation specialists-one assigned to each community. Selected classroom teachers have also been identified as "content leads" and facilitate discussions during vertical team planning meetings regarding instructional delivery.

- The design of the current school schedule allows quality time for teachers to engage in content area vertical articulation; however limited time is allotted for teachers to meet as community teams to discuss common students they teach. The school's master schedule includes common planning time for teachers by content area. For example, all 6th-11th grade math teachers in the building may have 2nd period planning. However, this structure prevents allotted time for teachers on the same community to meet to discuss progress of their students except informally during before and after school sessions.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback,

management, and use of technology.

A critical component of the external review process focused on observing and assessing student learning throughout the school. During the visit, members of the ERT assessed the learning environment by completing 15 classroom observations and by documenting these observations using the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tools (ELEOT). Data compiled from results captured via the ELEOT revealed the highest score (2.38) was in the Active Learning Environment indicating students were engaged in the learning activities oftentimes through discussions with the teacher and/or with their peers. The majority of classrooms were well managed where observations were made of a clear understanding of rules, procedures, and practices and demonstrated respect among teachers and peers. The overall score on the ELEOT in the Well-Managed Learning Environment was 2.21. Even though classes observed were very small, the team witnessed limited differentiated instruction or personalized learning where students were engaged in rigorous instruction with clear references to the application of their learning to real life situations. The lowest observation score (1.16) on the ELEOT was derived in the Digital Learning Environment. Out of the 15 classrooms observed, only one included the student's effective use of digital tools to conduct research, solve problems, collaborate, or create. However, the team did observe the teacher utilization of technology through the use of SmartBoards to project video streamed content to enhance instruction.

FHA is one of three non-traditional high schools in the APS district and serves students in grades 6-11 who have been assigned through the tribunal process. Even though student assignments are for varying periods of time, the FHA staff has embraced a purpose and direction that focuses on educating and equipping all of the students that rotate through their doors by "preparing them for success in life, service, and leadership".

The FHA administrators, teachers, staff, students, and parent graciously welcomed the review team to the school campus. A hospitable environment was established even prior to the team's arrival so as to ensure a sense of comfort throughout the visit. Staff members who had key leadership roles in preparing for the visit were diligent in performing all tasks both before and during the review. The team would like to especially commend the staff for pursuing the accreditation process and engaging in collaborative dialogue regarding continuous improvement even during times of uncertainty precipitated partially because of changes in leadership.

The ERT views FHA as an organization that is clearly on the right track in terms of continuous improvement. The action identified in this report can serve to support the movement along this journey as the school works toward achieving its vision of becoming "a model institution for alternative education with a student and family focus where students achieve academically and become socially responsive learners and leaders prepared for college and careers".

The members of the ERT recommend full accreditation pending further review and final action of the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

Required Actions

1. Investigate strategies that support the effective use of digital tools by students to support teaching and learning.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
4.5

According to information included in the Self Assessment, technology resources available at the school include: two-six desktop computers in each classroom, two computer labs, two stationary SmartBoards, and one mobile laptop cart. Many of the desktop computers housed in the classrooms appeared to be quite old and outdated. Teachers were administered laptop computers by the school district. Observations also revealed six desktop computers housed in the media center. However, observations revealed very limited use of technologies by students in the classroom. Out of 15 total observations, only one resulted in evidence of student use of digital tools to enhance learning. Even though observations included the teacher use of SmartBoards to access video streamed broadcasts and commercials, students, for the most part, were only passive observers of the use of technology.

Digital tools serve as viable resources to engage student learners, to personalize instruction, and to promote critical thinking skills as students have the opportunity to collaborate and create their learning environment. The necessity of acquiring and utilizing technology skills is not a prognosis for the future but a certainty of the current world in which our students live. The reality of education is that schooling is preparing students for careers and opportunities that have not yet been discovered. Schooling should therefore engage in systemic practices to ensure students are able to access and utilize digital tools on a regular basis as a means of enhancing the teaching and learning process and to better ensure preparation for future endeavors. Effective teachers constantly encourage the use of technologies as instructional resources and learning tools.

2. Develop and implement structures and schedules to ensure instructional time is protected.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
4.2

Even though limited interruptions were noted during the school day while the ERT was conducting the visit, interviews revealed concerns regarding lost instructional time due to the staggered time students arrive at school each day. The school's master schedule indicates that students are involved in an advisory period each day from 8:30-9:00. However, because of fluctuating transportation schedules, many students do not arrive at school until approximately 9:30 each morning. Such late arrivals cause loss of focused support during the advisory time as well as during content delivery that should occur during the next instructional segment.

Efforts focused on continuous improvement should include ensuring quality, uninterrupted time is provided for instruction and that the protection of this time is a priority. Such a priority aligns with the school's purpose and direction and supports organizational effectiveness.

3. Prioritize professional development plans to include training on data collection, analysis, and utilization to support instructional improvement and overall organizational effectiveness.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

5.3

Interviews with teachers revealed a limited amount of staff members have been involved in quality professional learning session on how to analyze and utilize data to support instructional improvement. Much of the analysis of data has been at the simplistic level of comparing performance of students from one year to the next. The Student Performance Diagnostic repeatedly included the concern of having a transient population so as to make it even more difficult to draw valid conclusions regarding performance results. Additionally, the Diagnostic report indicated that the school does not have many subgroups. However, subgroups based on gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and disabilities are recognizable in the school and should serve as the basis of data analysis based on such groupings.

The Self Assessment also revealed a need for a “data team” approach indicating the desire to have collaborative opportunities for groups of staff members to carefully analyze data, to identify root causes of student performance, and to develop strategic plans for improvement based on data findings. Because FHA has been identified as a “Priority School”, a School Improvement Specialist from the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) is visible in the building on a regular basis. This person serves in the capacity of a support resource in compiling data for use during school improvement discussions.

Data collection, analysis, and use serve as the foundation for any continuous improvement process. In order to ensure this foundation is solidified, professional and support staff members should be regularly and systematically trained in a rigorous professional learning program related to the effective use of data to drive organizational improvement.

4. Formalize and evaluate structures to ensure each child has at least one adult advocate in the building.

Primary Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

3.9

Evidence provided to document the presence of structures that support the development of positive relationships between each student and an adult in the building included the Individual Learning Plans and compliance reports that include details on each student's academic, attendance, and behavioral progress. However, there was no indication that these written documents were combined with ongoing scheduled conversations with individual students regarding performance and progress. Additionally, the master schedule includes a thirty minute period of time designated for advisory. However, because of transportation problems, many of the students do not arrive to school in time for effective involvement in an advisory program. There was also no clear guidance as to what should take place during the advisory period.

Many external agencies are utilized to support the physical, social, and emotional needs of students. These include agencies such as TWI Counseling, New Beginnings Today, LLC, and PABS Family Counseling & Interventions Services (PFCIS). However, services provided by these agencies are not available on a daily basis and not to all students.

According to the Self Assessment, school based counseling organization was implemented during the current school year and includes intake meetings with students when they enroll and group counseling during Your Future Is At Stake (Y-FAS) sessions.

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. 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 which meets at a designated time during the school day have proven effective in terms of fostering long term positive relationships between students and adults in the building.

Addenda

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the Team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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, along with 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 (founded 1917) joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students. The Northwest Accreditation Commission joined the AdvancED network in 2011.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

Report of the External Review Team for Henry Grady High School

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Date: April 20, 2015 - April 21, 2015



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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 Team conducted an evaluation of Henry W. Grady High School, a public school within the Atlanta Public Schools, that serves approximately 1300 students in grades 9 through 12. The dates for the review were April 19-21, 2015. The school is a diverse urban high school located in Midtown Atlanta, Georgia. The Team included an AdvancED certified Lead Evaluator plus five highly qualified professionals. The extraordinary professionalism and commitment of Team members to AdvancED's Performance Accreditation protocol was impressive and were assets to the quality and effectiveness of the external review.

To prepare for the external review, the Lead Evaluator met with Grady's Principal (Timothy Guiney) and his assistant (Carrie MacBrien), who had primary responsibility for the 2015 accreditation process. All aspects of the upcoming review, especially the schedule, stakeholder interviews, classroom observations, and all preparatory activities such as compilation of the school's accreditation report and stakeholder surveying were discussed at length. Numerous follow-up emails between Guiney, MacBrien, and the Lead Evaluator resolved questions and concerns. In preparation for the external review, the Lead Evaluator communicated with and supported Team members by 1) posting key AdvancED and visit -specific explanatory documents and tools on the Team Workspace, 2) emailing, calling, and working one-on-one to answer questions and provide reminders, 3) providing a step-by-step guide to facilitate their access to and use of the school's Accreditation

Report (Executive Summary, Self-Assessment, Stakeholder Feedback, Student Performance Diagnostics, and School Assurances) in AdvancED's ASSIST platform, and 4) coordinated distribution of the school's evidence artifacts electronically via flash-drive, which was sent by the school to each Team member. Team members engaged in extensive review and analysis of the school's accreditation materials

To broaden the team members' perspectives and understanding, they conducted informative activities onsite, which included: 1) using a standard protocol and interviewing representative groups of stakeholders (totaling 181 people), 2) observing students during instruction in 30 classrooms using AdvancED's Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool™ (eleot™), 3) observing practices and operational procedures across the school's large campus of seven instructional areas, and 4) reviewing additional evidence from school artifacts and gaining clarification from school staff. Using all evidence collected, the Team deliberated, independently assessed/rated performance on the AdvancED Standards and Indicators and evaluative criteria in two diagnostic areas, during Team Work Sessions collaboratively developed specific, evidence-rich findings (Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, Improvement Priorities) to further guide the school on its continuous improvement journey.

The school was extremely well prepared to host the Team. The accreditation reports and materials were of extremely high quality with detailed explanations and extensive documentary evidence. All deadlines such as posting reports on ASSIST and following-up on details and requests were met on time. Because staff had attended recent AdvancED Georgia Conferences, all staff as well as other school stakeholders began their self-assessment activities the year before the review. This kind of thorough preparation and commitment are especially noteworthy, given that the current principal was named during spring 2014 and the system has a new superintendent.

The school administration and all school staff epitomized professionalism, great understanding of and commitment to the AdvancED accreditation process, and a collegial spirit before and during the review. As one Team member noted, "from the opening (Principal's Overview) presentation on Sunday...the hospitality (displayed) by the staff and stakeholders gave powerful insight regarding the sincere tradition of support (at) Grady High School."

The Team appreciated the great hospitality conveyed by the staff and other stakeholders. Their kindness contributed to a climate that firmly supported the Team's cohesion and comfort during several very busy days. Students were especially courteous to Team members throughout the campus, sharing meaningful insights, thoughts, and concerns. All of these created an extremely positive environment that supported the Team's work and efforts to ensure a productive, substantive evaluation.

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
Chief Executive Officer/President	1
Administrators	10
Instructional Staff	46
Support Staff	12
Students	88
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	24
Total	181

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 school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The school'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.	2.83	2.88
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	2.50	2.53
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.83	2.67
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.00	2.78
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	2.83	2.63
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.83	2.66
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.33	2.58
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.17	3.12

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	2.83	3.07
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.	2.00	2.77
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.67	2.57
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	2.17	2.71

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.17	2.72
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.	2.67	2.44
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	2.33	2.09
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	2.67	2.53
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	3.33	2.78

Student Performance Diagnostic

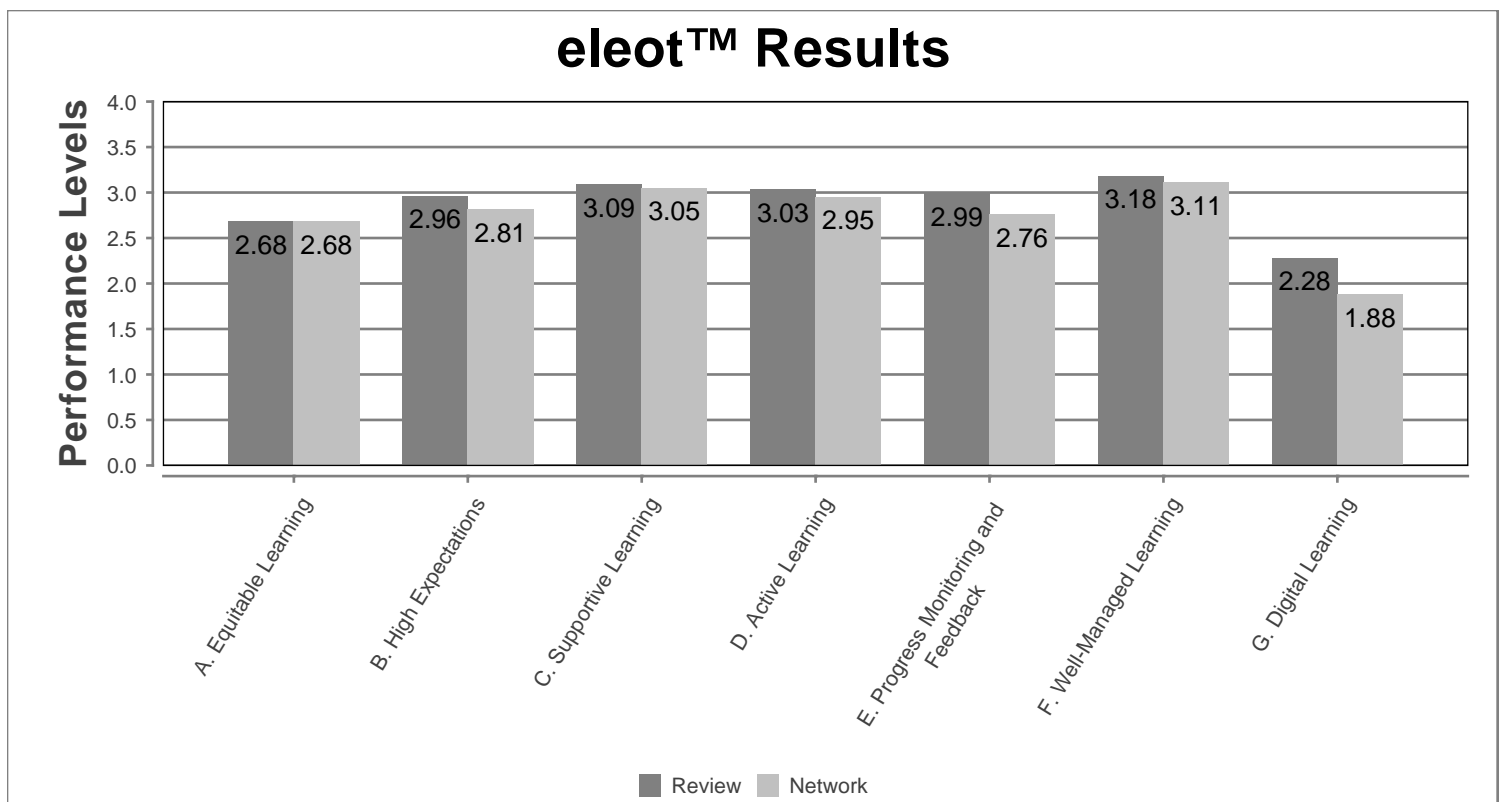
The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	4.00	3.10
Test Administration	3.83	3.47
Equity of Learning	3.00	2.74
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.98

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

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



The Team conducted 30 classroom observations, approximately one-third of the teaching staff, using the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™).

The school had prepared for classroom observation process and teachers and students were comfortable with Team members observing during their class periods. Due to the size and layout of the campus, the Lead

Evaluator worked diligently with the school's leaders to organize a schedule of observations.

Observations spanned a broad sampling of the school's course content areas, including English/Language Arts/Journalism; science; social studies; mathematics; health/physical education; music/band and chorus; foreign language; ROTC; speech/forensics; art; and College/Career Pathway areas of marketing, engineering, visual arts, graphic arts, photography, audio-visual technology, and film.

Team members worked vigorously to meet these observational criteria so that data results would faithfully provide evidence for validating the school's self-assessment.

The Learning Environments that received the highest average scores from classroom observations conducted during the review were:

- (F) Well-Managed Learning Environment with an average score of 3.18
- (C) Supportive Learning Environment with an average score of 3.09, and
- (D) Active Learning Environment with an average score of 3.03.

In addition, two Learning Environments whose averages were in close proximity to the highest three noted above were:

- (E) Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment with an average score of 2.99, and
- (B) High Expectations Environment with an average score of 2.96.

The Learning Environment that received the lowest average scores from classroom observations conducted were:

- (A) Equitable Learning Environment with an average score of 2.68, and
- (G) Digital Learning Environment with an average score of 2.28.

The Team's average scores for six (6) learning environments slightly exceeded the average scores for those domains of the AdvancED Network (AEN). Only in the Equitable Learning Environment did the Team's average score (2.68) equal the AEN average score. This observation evidence, and most importantly its four (4) discrete indicators, strongly connects with Team findings and improvement priorities related to needs for increased differentiation of instruction and greater access to course content for all students.

For example, the Team found numerous examples, even in inclusion core-content classes, that learning opportunities such as classroom discussions, activities, and use of instructional technology resources are not sufficiently differentiated and/or delivered to support a variety of learning needs. Especially in mathematics and science classes, the Team found a lack of active, on-task learner engagement and appropriate instructional and behavioral interventions needed to support learners who needed them. Findings relative to this Environment clearly relate to best practices' research, as enumerated in Standard 3, Indicators 3.2, 3.4, 3.7, and 3.12.

Most observed classroom practices averaged slightly higher than the AEN averages. However, the Team believes that Grady's stakeholders, especially its leaders, staff, and parents, desire much greater performance in these critically important learning domains. The Team noted that these findings align with improvement themes and strategic directions identified by the principal. Improving professional practice in all seven learning environments hold the keys for success for all students.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.90	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	30.00%	33.33%	33.33%	3.33%
2.	3.27	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	36.67%	56.67%	3.33%	3.33%
3.	2.97	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	30.00%	46.67%	13.33%	10.00%
4.	1.60	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	6.67%	10.00%	20.00%	63.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.68						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.10	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	36.67%	40.00%	20.00%	3.33%
2.	3.20	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	40.00%	40.00%	20.00%	0.00%
3.	2.60	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	43.33%	6.67%	16.67%	33.33%
4.	2.90	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	26.67%	43.33%	23.33%	6.67%
5.	3.00	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	40.00%	33.33%	13.33%	13.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.96						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.23	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	46.67%	36.67%	10.00%	6.67%
2.	3.17	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	40.00%	40.00%	16.67%	3.33%
3.	3.10	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	43.33%	33.33%	13.33%	10.00%
4.	3.27	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	53.33%	23.33%	20.00%	3.33%
5.	2.67	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	23.33%	36.67%	23.33%	16.67%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.09						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.43	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	53.33%	36.67%	10.00%	0.00%
2.	2.60	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	26.67%	30.00%	20.00%	23.33%
3.	3.07	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	33.33%	43.33%	20.00%	3.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.03						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.20	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	50.00%	26.67%	16.67%	6.67%
2.	3.17	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	40.00%	40.00%	16.67%	3.33%
3.	3.17	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	40.00%	40.00%	16.67%	3.33%
4.	2.73	Understands how her/his work is assessed	30.00%	36.67%	10.00%	23.33%
5.	2.70	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	33.33%	30.00%	10.00%	26.67%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.99						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.40	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	63.33%	16.67%	16.67%	3.33%
2.	3.23	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	46.67%	33.33%	16.67%	3.33%
3.	2.97	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	43.33%	26.67%	13.33%	16.67%
4.	2.90	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	46.67%	16.67%	16.67%	20.00%
5.	3.40	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	63.33%	16.67%	16.67%	3.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.18						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.43	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	33.33%	16.67%	10.00%	40.00%
2.	2.00	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	20.00%	13.33%	13.33%	53.33%
3.	2.40	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	30.00%	20.00%	10.00%	40.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.28						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Establish a school culture that demonstrates a systemic commitment to teaching all students to achieve critical higher order learning skills through mastery of challenging content.
(Indicators 1.2, 3.7)

Evidence and Rationale

The school's culture is described as ...'consistent with (its) purpose and direction"--"...of a high-performing school"—“with a caring culture of trust and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college and career.” As evidenced from artifacts provided by the school, its culture has been built upon a tradition of academic and extra-curricular success, involvement of its local School Council, and stakeholder engagement. Giving changing dynamics within the Atlanta Public Schools, the school adopted (Fall 2014) the system's revised mission/vision as an interim step until it can effectively begin its own revision/alignment processes in June 2015. The Team praises Grady’s leaders for acknowledging its current journey and encourages them to strongly consider the Team’s findings related to the school’s culture and its commitments to all learners.

The school's theme of “Individually we are different; together we are Grady” should clearly resonate in the reality of every classroom. Team members found numerous examples, suggesting less than a solid commitment of supporting learning success for all students. For instance, many classroom learning opportunities (discussions, activities, and student technology resources) were observed as inaccessible to all students due to insufficient differentiation of content (instruction) and/or insufficient use of more appropriate learning support such as materials or technology. These were observed in regular as well as in inclusion/co-teaching core content classes. In some mathematics and science classes, the Team observed a lack of active engagement in classroom activities by a large number of students combined with a lack of timely interventions (instructional or behavioral) when needed to re-engage learners. Observational evidence supported these

findings: the Team's average scores for six (6) learning environments were slightly higher than AdvancED Network (AEN) averages. However, for the "Equitable Learning Environment," the Team's average was 2.68, which was not greater than but just equal the AEN average score. In the "Equitable Learning Environment" descriptors such as the need for differentiated learning opportunities, equal access to classroom activities and support, and consistent application of rules and consequences, clearly identify what equity should look like.

During collaborative planning meetings, artifact and interview evidence indicated that some informal discussion occurs regarding effective alternative instructional strategies or learning materials appropriate for less capable learners. Minutes indicated that such discussion centered on assistance to new, not veteran teachers. Little evidence suggested that mentoring or peer coaching practices were routinely employed to assist veteran teachers to deliver challenging content through means of differentiated instruction.

School cultures should demonstrate a solid commitment to equitable learning opportunities for all students. These are integral to the school's shared purpose and collaborative underpinnings as well as to its success.

Improvement Priority

Implement formal processes that systematically monitor and adjust classroom practice to better meet individual learning needs by using multiple types of student performance results and standardized classroom observations.

(Indicators 2.6, 3.2, 3.4)

Evidence and Rationale

The Team's review of artifacts revealed a performance decline in some core curricular areas, including mathematics, science, and social studies. Many artifacts displaying data results and analysis and information shared during the principal's overview suggested that gaps in academic achievement/performance are not decreasing among several sub-populations of Grady's students, especially students with disabilities.

Further review of artifacts such as teacher lesson plans and interviews with teachers confirmed that formal classroom monitoring by school leaders occurs. However, quality feedback pertinent to improving curricular and instructional practice from such monitoring as well from review of lesson plans is not routinely provided. Observations by the Team corroborated these findings, namely Team averages for descriptors in the Environments of "Equitable Learning", "Supportive Learning," and "Progress Monitoring and Feedback." Discussing curricular/instructional adjustments in the classroom specific to unique learner needs in the content area occurs during common planning times and/or professional learning communities informally. However, such sharing and discussion is occurring neither consistently across the school nor with focus on current 'best practice' research for core content/disciplines or individual student performance results.

An essential focus of school leaders is regular monitoring, supervising, and consistent evaluating of what occurs in classrooms; thus, inherent within this responsibility is facilitating staff in using quality data and substantive feedback to adjust professional curriculum and instructional practices when needed.

Effective collaboration and communication between leaders and staff can serve as school improvement

catalysts and engender increasing degrees of success for every student.

Improvement Priority

Implement systematically data analysis and instructional practices that effectively support differentiation to meet each learner's needs in all core content courses.

(Indicators 3.12)

Evidence and Rationale

The diversity of students' learning needs is increasing at Grady High School. The school's artifacts indicated that several plans such as the Balanced Literacy, Dropout Recovery, Numeracy, Gifted Collaboration) exist to inform support for learners with special needs or abilities. Additionally, artifacts indicated that some professional learning opportunities specific to this arena have been offered (Co-Teaching, GA RTI, Grady RTI, and Gifted ID and Assessment).

Little evidence from stakeholder interviews and survey results indicated that the unique learning needs of some students are actually impacting curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. As more fully described in other sections of this report, the Team observed little differentiation of classroom instruction. This finding indicates that effective instructional differentiation training that offers practical solutions is inconsistent. Training of this type can link many traditional strategies to meet students' levels of readiness, interests and learning preferences/styles. Differentiation personalizes learning, tailors teaching to learning needs, and typically increases learner engagement.

During the principal's overview session, however, there was clear acknowledgment of needs and concerns related to this issue. These were identified as "Plans for Improvement" and they included:

- 'Increased usage of math manipulatives and instructional technology....';
- 'Continued professional development to increase data usage to inform remediation, re-teaching, enrichment in math classrooms as part of weekly Professional Learning Communities';
- 'Increased data analysis to inform placement in English/Language Arts support for reading achievement gains through Reading Plus';
- 'Professional Learning Communities planning in math, social science, and science to include frequent implementation of constructed response with teacher feedback';
- 'Increased co-teaching professional learning for both students with disabilities teachers and applicable core teachers'.

The Team strongly encourages the school to use their self-assessed needs in addressing this Improvement Priority.

Schools must ensure that all students are provided appropriate support to maximize their learning.

Opportunity for Improvement

Formalize the school's existing process of continuous improvement by applying it consistently to systemically drive all improvement efforts.

(Indicators 5.4)

Evidence and Rationale

The school's process of continuous improvement is described as a cycle of activities-- "Plan, Do, Check, and Act". School artifacts provided evidence that an improvement process exists that has produced extensive improvement planning documents. These documents include the 2014-15 Title I/School-Wide Improvement Plan, the 2014-15 Grady High School Continuous Improvement Plan for Improving Student Support and Achievement, and the 2014-15 School Counseling Plan. Summative data analysis to inform improvement actions at macro levels is routinely conducted and communicated to all stakeholders. However, a less-than clear understanding of and ability to articulate the school's process or improvement cycle exists. This was particularly evident during interviews with leaders and teaching staff. While important parts of the process could be identified such as collecting and analyzing data and establishing measurable performance goals, other important parts could not. Some professional learning about the school's process has occurred, an update is necessary.

Updated training for all staff would strengthen understanding of the integral role each part of the process plays, better ensure consistent application school-wide, and engender unity of purpose and action. Quality schools create and use systematic processes that drive its improvement efforts. Quality processes help sustain student success and school effectiveness.

Opportunity for Improvement

Implement with fidelity across all grade levels and courses common grading and reporting policies/processes/procedures that are based upon clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills for all students.

(Indicators 3.10)

Evidence and Rationale

The Team conducted interviews with teacher, parent, and student stakeholders and reviewed artifacts such as lesson plans, course curricula, writing diagnostics and rubrics, and course syllabi shared on the school's website. Some teachers indicated that grading practices are informally discussed during department meetings, but there is little evidence indicating consensus or definition of grading criteria or evaluation of grading practices. Students indicated that there are inconsistencies in grading within the same course. There was minimal evidence indicating differentiation of progress monitoring and/or assessment practices for students with special learning needs. From this evidence, the Team determined that common grading procedures/practices appear neither clearly defined nor consistently implemented across all content areas or grade levels.

Effective schools collaborate across grade levels and within and across core content instructional areas so that common criteria will be used for measuring learning among all types of learners. Effective grading practices are based on such foundation criteria, not only to determine to what extent the student is mastering curricular content/skills, but also to ensure that all students receive appropriate instruction and access to knowledge.

With formal development, consistent implementation, and regular communication of common grading processes, parents can be assured that equitable teaching and maximum learning occurs.

Powerful Practice

School personnel effectively maintain and consistently use a comprehensive student assessment and school effectiveness system that produces high quality data from multiple assessment measures and informs improvement efforts.

(Indicators 5.1)

Evidence and Rationale

The school's assessment system produces aggregated, disaggregated, and longitudinal (trend) data. It includes a broad range of standardized student assessment information such as End of Course test results in core content areas, Advanced Placement results, and College and Career Readiness Performance that has been presented with subgroup (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, racial group) comparisons. This system also produces a variety of organizational data such as staff demographics (racial composition, educational preparation and years' experience), student graduation rates, attendance and discipline data, and school population demographics.

Strong evidence corroborating the quality and comprehensiveness of the system was found in the school's Accreditation Report, including the Student Performance Diagnostic. Other supporting evidence was found in artifacts such as the school's 2014-15 Title I/School-Wide Improvement and Continuous Improvement Plans and during the principal's Overview. The comprehensive system produces reliable and bias free information, ensuring consistent achievement measurement across classrooms and content areas.

Especially noteworthy was the continuous use of results by school leaders to inform planning and to establish improvement goals. Led by the principal, decision making and envisioning were driven by data analysis. For instance, throughout the school's Accreditation Report and artifacts provided, insightful strengths and areas needing improvement were accompanied and reinforced by clearly-linked supporting data results. The use of school performance comparisons and trend data in the Student Performance Diagnostic section showed the value placed by the school on communicating these kinds of data to student and parent stakeholders.

When school leaders commit to using valid information about student learning and school performance, they embrace a solid foundation upon which to make continuous improvement decisions and engage stakeholders.

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 school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction 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 school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	3.17	2.75
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	2.50	3.04
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.00	2.61

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 school.	3.17	2.98
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.17	2.96
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	3.00	3.18
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	3.17	3.13
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	3.83	2.82
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	2.17	2.82

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	3.83	3.38
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00	3.08

Findings

Improvement Priority

Establish a school culture that demonstrates a systemic commitment to teaching all students to achieve critical higher order learning skills through mastery of challenging content.

(Indicators 1.2, 3.7)

Evidence and Rationale

The school's culture is described as ...'consistent with (its) purpose and direction"--"...of a high-performing school"—“with a caring culture of trust and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college and career.” As evidenced from artifacts provided by the school, its culture has been built upon a tradition of academic and extra-curricular success, involvement of its local School Council, and stakeholder engagement. Giving changing dynamics within the Atlanta Public Schools, the school adopted (Fall 2014) the system's revised mission/vision as an interim step until it can effectively begin its own revision/alignment processes in June 2015. The Team praises Grady’s leaders for acknowledging its current journey and encourages them to strongly consider the Team’s findings related to the school’s culture and its commitments to all learners.

The school's theme of “Individually we are different; together we are Grady” should clearly resonate in the reality of every classroom. Team members found numerous examples, suggesting less than a solid commitment of supporting learning success for all students. For instance, many classroom learning opportunities (discussions, activities, and student technology resources) were observed as inaccessible to all students due to insufficient differentiation of content (instruction) and/or insufficient use of more appropriate learning support such as materials or technology. These were observed in regular as well as in inclusion/co-teaching core content classes. In some mathematics and science classes, the Team observed a lack of active engagement in classroom activities by a large number of students combined with a lack of timely interventions (instructional or behavioral) when needed to re-engage learners. Observational evidence supported these

findings: the Team's average scores for six (6) learning environments were slightly higher than AdvancED Network (AEN) averages. However, for the "Equitable Learning Environment," the Team's average was 2.68, which was not greater than but just equal the AEN average score. In the "Equitable Learning Environment" descriptors such as the need for differentiated learning opportunities, equal access to classroom activities and support, and consistent application of rules and consequences, clearly identify what equity should look like.

During collaborative planning meetings, artifact and interview evidence indicated that some informal discussion occurs regarding effective alternative instructional strategies or learning materials appropriate for less capable learners. Minutes indicated that such discussion centered on assistance to new, not veteran teachers. Little evidence suggested that mentoring or peer coaching practices were routinely employed to assist veteran teachers to deliver challenging content through means of differentiated instruction.

School cultures should demonstrate a solid commitment to equitable learning opportunities for all students. These are integral to the school's shared purpose and collaborative underpinnings as well as to its success.

Improvement Priority

Implement formal processes that systematically monitor and adjust classroom practice to better meet individual learning needs by using multiple types of student performance results and standardized classroom observations.

(Indicators 2.6, 3.2, 3.4)

Evidence and Rationale

The Team's review of artifacts revealed a performance decline in some core curricular areas, including mathematics, science, and social studies. Many artifacts displaying data results and analysis and information shared during the principal's overview suggested that gaps in academic achievement/performance are not decreasing among several sub-populations of Grady's students, especially students with disabilities.

Further review of artifacts such as teacher lesson plans and interviews with teachers confirmed that formal classroom monitoring by school leaders occurs. However, quality feedback pertinent to improving curricular and instructional practice from such monitoring as well from review of lesson plans is not routinely provided. Observations by the Team corroborated these findings, namely Team averages for descriptors in the Environments of "Equitable Learning", "Supportive Learning," and "Progress Monitoring and Feedback." Discussing curricular/instructional adjustments in the classroom specific to unique learner needs in the content area occurs during common planning times and/or professional learning communities informally. However, such sharing and discussion is occurring neither consistently across the school nor with focus on current 'best practice' research for core content/disciplines or individual student performance results.

An essential focus of school leaders is regular monitoring, supervising, and consistent evaluating of what occurs in classrooms; thus, inherent within this responsibility is facilitating staff in using quality data and substantive feedback to adjust professional curriculum and instructional practices when needed.

Effective collaboration and communication between leaders and staff can serve as school improvement

catalysts and engender increasing degrees of success for every student.

Powerful Practice

Grady High School's leaders communicate consistently and effectively with a broad array of stakeholder groups and provide them meaningful opportunities in crafting school improvements.

(Indicators 2.5)

Evidence and Rationale

Beginning with evidence cited in the school's 'Accreditation Self-Assessment', artifacts it provided and corroborated during interviews, it is clear that school leaders effectively communicate with and seek ideas, suggestions and concerns from staff, student, parent and community stakeholders. Examples supporting this abound in print and electronic artifacts such as THE GRADY GRAM, Principal Coffees, Title I parent surveys, workshops and informational meetings, the Counseling Department's Needs Assessment, and events like New Student Orientations, grade level parent meetings and Back-To-School Night. Communication is regularly delivered in language appropriate for the stakeholder audience.

The value placed on stakeholder input and 'buy-in' is quite evident from Information shared during "The Principal's Overview". While having only been on staff since summer 2014, the Principal demonstrates a keen understanding of the school's current realities (strengths and challenges) as well as the shifting accountability and administrative landscapes, existing beyond Grady's walls. The Principal and his leadership team are proactive. They seek to clarify, especially policy changes and accountability/testing requirements. They strategically plan/address thorny issues such as vertical/cluster collaboration and innovations especially to ease 9th graders' transition, need for increasing academic achievement in all content areas for students with special learning needs, need for increasing parental engagement among under-represented groups, operational problems such as attendance and tardies and campus safety, and increasing staff unity.

School leaders who effectively communicate with and engage stakeholder groups garner greater support for new ideas and change.. By providing stakeholders substantive roles in creating solutions for school problems, a stronger culture of continuous improvement for improving student learning is created.

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 school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	3.17	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	3.00	3.00
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.33	3.11
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	3.33	2.83
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.33	2.56

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	3.00	2.89
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	3.17	2.80

Findings

Opportunity for Improvement

Update the existing technology plan using needs assessment data gathered from staff, students, and parents. (Indicators 4.5)

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with staff who have designated school technology responsibilities revealed that technology equipment is provided to the school annually and is financed through various program/budget appropriations, grants, and system initiatives. The Team noted the perception that varying levels of comfort and ‘buy-in’ existed among staff usage of technology (especially for instruction). Training workshops/professional development on using technology have been and will continue to be offered.

The school currently utilizes the Atlanta Public Schools Technology Plan rather than having developed a school level plan. The Team believes that as a part of implementing systematic continuous improvement planning school-wide, the school should examine and update its Technology Plan.

In few classrooms where observations were conducted, the Team observed interactive use (between teachers and students) of Promethean Boards. While many classrooms contained desktop and laptop computers available for student use, little actual student usage of this equipment was observed. In some classes, many students used personal electronic/digital tools such as cell phones and/or tablets; but it appeared that such devices were being used more often for texting and emailing rather than for gathering research information or working collaboratively. An average score of 2.28 (based on a 4-point scale) in the ‘Digital Learning Environment’ further supported this finding.

In the 21st century, employment at all levels requires skills in communicating, operating, and problem solving using technology. All of today’s students need a firm foundation in using higher and higher levels of digital equipment across the curriculum, not only for college and career preparation, but also for enriched lifelong learning.

Powerful Practice

The school provides many unique services and programs specifically designed to support the needs of increasingly diverse students. (Indicators 4.7)

Evidence and Rationale

There is a long tradition at Grady of academic excellence, recognized in traditional ways including honors in Advanced Placement and Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics (STEM) performance, Governor's Honors participation, and millions of dollars awarded in college scholarships to graduating students. Similarly, there is an enduring connection between Grady and its community of parents, business partners, alumni, and others-- not the least of these are a cadre of veteran educators and staff who continue to make a positive difference in students' lives. "Stay in Touch Grady" exemplifies the active role played by the school's Parent-Teacher-Student Association in the life of this school. Such connections become realized through the provision by the community of valuable human and financial resources that benefit students. Amid the school district's changing landscape, Grady remains a stable institution of learning and community pride.

As Grady's student population has become more diverse socioeconomically and academically, school leaders and community partners have stepped forward to adapt as well as create additional mechanisms to support students. To enumerate a few:

- Grady Writing Center (free writing assistance)—after school and no cost to students or parents
- Tutoring
- Mathematics support using ALEKS and Literacy support using Reading Plus
- Grady College and Career Center—using parent volunteers
- College and Career Counselor—grant funded
- Wednesday Tutoring Time
- Mentoring programs for male and female students—Great Promise Partnership, Kappa League, Teens on the Move, Grady Officers Club, etc.
- Wide offering of unique extra-curricular and athletic activities often sponsored/coached by community members, such as the G3 Robotics Team, Lacrosse Team
- Various student-produced literary publications (magazines and newspaper)
- Dual-Enrollment courses on and off campus

Through the Principal's visionary leadership and support of many stakeholders, great promise and continuous improvement is emerging through school-cluster (elementary, middle and high school) planning and vertical alignment, and the district's flexibility approaches.

Embracing diversity, actively striving to meet its challenges, and empowering shared leadership are hallmarks of continuous improvement in 21st century schools.

Conclusion

General themes that emerged were:

- 1) There was equity of learning opportunities and equal access to support services for all students.
- 2) The school provides many unique services and programs specifically designed to support the needs of increasingly diverse students. (Standard 4.7, Powerful Practice, Resource Utilization Domain)
- 3) The school should implement with fidelity across all grade levels and courses common grading and reporting policies/processes/procedures based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills for all students. This should include formal evaluation strategies of the implemented grading and reporting practices. (3.10, Opportunity for Improvement, Teaching and Learning Impact Domain)
- 4) Establish the school's culture to that demonstrates a systemic commitment to teaching all students to achieve critical higher order learning skills through mastery of challenging content. Sustain this culture through formal avenues of mentoring and coaching. (1.2, 3.7, Improvement Priority, Leadership Capacity and Teaching and Learning Impact Domains)
- 5) There is a strong sense of freedom of expression and acknowledged diversity among students and staff that permeates the school's climate.

The Team feels that to close the gap in student achievement and performance, the school should:

- 1) Implement systematically data analysis and instructional practices that effectively support differentiation to meet each learner's needs in all core content courses. (3.12, Improvement Priority, Teaching and Learning Impact Domain)
- 2) Use multiple types of student performance results and standardized classroom observations and implement formal processes that systematically monitor and adjust classroom practice to better meet individual learning needs. (3.2, 3.4, 2.6, Improvement Priority, Teaching and Learning Impact and Leadership Capacity Domains)
- 3) Stellar examples of academic and extra-curricular achievement and performance by many students across the school program were noted.

There was communication and engagement with a broad base of school stakeholders to include the following themes:

- 1) The school's leaders communicate consistently and effectively with a broad array of stakeholders and provide them meaningful opportunities in crafting school improvements. (2.5, Powerful Practice, Leadership Capacity Domain)

- 2) Update the school's existing technology plan using needs assessment data gathered from staff, student, and parent stakeholders at a minimum. (4.5, Opportunity for Improvement, Resource Utilization Domain)
- 3) The school has strong stakeholder support, including a tradition of active parent involvement, alumni assistance, and the provision of human and financial resources.
- 4) The school should use of a wide variety of print and electronic vehicles to communicate in timely and appropriate ways with all stakeholders.
- 5) There is effective use of existing facilities such as the Media and College Connection Centers that serve as a valuable resources for students, staff, and parents.

School personnel effectively maintain and consistently use a comprehensive student assessment and school effectiveness system that produces high quality data from multiple assessment measures and informs improvement efforts. (5.1, Powerful Practice, Teaching and Learning Impact Domain). Achievement of the school's 2010 SACS recommendation to improve data analysis, data training, and usage was evident by comprehensive data descriptions used to inform planning for school improvement and Title I in 2014-15.

Challenges that Grady High School faces include the following.

-Impacting student achievement and performance positively:

- 1) Closing achievement gaps.
- 2) Accelerating improvement within all core content areas, for all student sub-populations.
- 3) Equipping staff to deliver differentiated instruction.
- 4) Equipping leadership to perform critical instructional supervision and evaluation responsibilities that will build teaching capacity.

-Adapting to changes in leadership styles, initiatives, and priorities at the school and system levels.

-Maintaining a steady course in the face of dynamic changes, including Flexibility Options and mandated testing/accountability requirements emanating from the system, state legislature, and state department of education.

-Changing school population demographics, including increased eligibility and need for special education and Title I services.

-Making needed organizational changes as the school moves from small learning communities and academies to grade levels and pathways; supporting students, parents, and staff in making these transitions.

-Increasing engagement among and communication with the school's African American and Economically

Disadvantaged parents and students.

-Improving the effectiveness of school operations related to student discipline, support services for social-emotional learning and students with unique characteristics, facility maintenance, the logistics of school safety, and campus security.

-Unifying the school staff.

Several major activities are already being planned to address challenges and needed improvements. These include the following:

- 1) Reviewing and updating the school's vision, mission, and beliefs.
- 2) Vertical planning with feeder schools to improve mathematics achievement and ease the transition of 9th graders.
- 3) Continuing professional development for staff in areas such as data usage to inform instruction (remediation, enrichment, differentiation, constructed response, and support for increasing reading performance), co-teaching, and use of manipulatives and instructional technology--mathematics, English/Language Arts, social studies, and science.
- 4) Improve master scheduling to enhance collaborative planning and the provision of professional development.
- 5) Continuing outreach through the Title I Parent Liaison and school leaders to increase engagement.
- 6) Hosting a leadership retreat to solidify distributed leadership efforts, develop improvement plans, and build unity.

Grady High School's IEQ scores are comprehensive numerical representations of performance in three domains--Teaching and Learning Impact, Leadership Capacity, and Resource Utilization. As a note of clarification, the IEQ scores reported herein for Grady differ slightly from those reported during the school's Exit Report on April 21, 2015. The IEQ score should not be viewed in isolation, but should be used to target areas for improvement.

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:

- Establish a school culture that demonstrates a systemic commitment to teaching all students to achieve critical higher order learning skills through mastery of challenging content.
- Implement formal processes that systematically monitor and adjust classroom practice to better meet

individual learning needs by using multiple types of student performance results and standardized classroom observations.

- Implement systematically data analysis and instructional practices that effectively support differentiation to meet each learner's needs in all core content courses.

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	293.16	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	280.95	274.14
Leadership Capacity	309.09	296.08
Resource Utilization	304.76	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

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Dr. Lucille W Hayden	Advanc-ED Field Consultant for GA SACS CASI, 7 years; SACS CASI Regional-Associate Executive Director--8yrs; Metro Atlanta School District-Director of Curriculum+ Instruction Pre K--12, Director of Vocation Ed, Assistant Principal--8yrs; State Dept of Ed, Director of Standards Development, State Coordinator of Title 1 Evaluation--7yrs; Adjunct UG and G Professor--3yrs; Graduate Teaching+ Research Assistant--3yrs; classroom teacher and Teacher of Gifted--11yrs.
Mrs. Patrice Barlow	I have worked in education for over 9 years and was the 2012-2013 Teacher-of-the-Year at S.L. Lewis Elementary school in Fulton County, GA. A graduate of Hampton University with a Masters in Early Childhood Education, I have a strong passion for educating children using the Common Core State Standards through the integration of Technology and The Arts. I have experience teaching students in Pre-K through fifth grades, and work with middle and high school students in after-school enrichment activities as a Program Developer. In 2011, my family and I founded a teacher, parent, student resource center called S.E.E.D. (Student Enrichment Empowering Development) Academy to support and encourage student success, in and outside of the classroom.
Ms. Vera Perry-harris	Coweta County School System Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction, School Test Coordinator, 6 years; GADOE Summer Summit Presenter; GAPSS Committee Member; School Improvement Team Member; Title I Plan Coordinator; Teacher of the Year- 3 years; Department Chair; Classroom Teacher- 9 years
Dr. Pamela Pitts	Dr. Pamela Pitts earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education at Saint Augustine's University, her Master in Education degree in Education Leadership from East Carolina University, and her Doctorate of Education degree in Education Leadership. Dr. Pitts, a dedicated educator with 23 years in the field of education has received numerous awards and recognition's honoring her commitment to the field of education in Clayton County Public Schools, Lincoln Nebraska Public Schools, and the Wilson County Public Schools and beyond. Dr. Pitts has been a dedicated member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. since 1990 and has served as president of both an alumnae and collegiate chapter.
Mrs. Carolyn G Randolph	She is a native of North Carolina. Nineteen years of teaching experience on the secondary and post secondary levels. Nineteen years of teaching in the state of Georgia as a mathematics teacher and Academic Coach/School Improvement Specialist for the past six years at Kendrick High School and adjunct math instructor at Columbus State University. Kendrick High School is a Title I school that received a School Improvement Grant based on the priority status. Serving as a leader in support and training of the teachers in the areas math and science, the priority status was removed in December 2014 because of improvement in test scores and graduation.

Member	Brief Biography
Dr. Janet S. Welsh	<p>In a long and varied career, Dr. Welsh has graduated from four universities in different states, worked in six different school districts in five states, and taught at three universities in different states. Her background includes teaching secondary mathematics, school counseling, and administration in school districts as small as 1,000 students, as large as 120,000 students, and more than a few in-between. She values the broader perspective she gained through these experiences. With a primary career focus in pupil services, she has worked tirelessly to support national standards for the delivery of school counseling services to all students. Dr. Welsh is a champion for the limitation of non-counseling duties in the daily activities of school counselors. Counselors' focus must consistently be on supporting student achievement by addressing personal/social and career development issues that impede and support success.</p>

Next Steps

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

About AdvancED

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

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

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

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Report of the
External Review
for
Maynard Holbrook Jackson High School

801 Glenwood Avenue, SE

Atlanta, GA, 30316
US

Stephanie S. Johnson, Ed.S, Principal

Date: May 14, 2014 - May 15, 2014



North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

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Introduction to the External Review

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of student performance or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, as well as evaluations of Student Performance, the Learning Environment, Stakeholder Feedback and Assurances.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. Before implementation, the standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains a detailed evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, identification of Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards (if appropriate), and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review team.

The AdvancED Standards and Indicators are the first of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Using indicator-specific performance levels, the External Review Team evaluates the degree to which the institution meets each indicator on a scale of 1 to 4. The scores assigned to the indicators are averaged to arrive at a single score. This score, along with scores from evaluations of student performance and stakeholder feedback, will be used to determine the accreditation status of the institution.

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	3.03
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Standard 1: The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and 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 30,000 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.

Standard 1			
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) • Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the school's purpose • Interviews 	3.0
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the school's statement of purpose • Interviews • Observations • Survey results • The school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • The school data profile • Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders • Interviews • Accreditation Report • The school continuous improvement plan 	3.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The school leadership and staff have transformed the school culture by actively engaging the community and communicating the expectation of high achievement and performance to all stakeholders.

1.2

Arriving less than two years ago, the principal and leadership team implemented a focused effort to change the perception of students, staff, and community about the school. Student, staff, and parent interviews and surveys recognize the change in the learning environment that has occurred at the school over those two years. No longer is the school viewed as a "dumping ground" or a mere "holding station." Now, students are seeing the value of their education, realizing the opportunities that open when they apply their learning to real life experiences, and availing themselves to more rigorous courses of study. The school leadership has intentionally reached into the community to engage business leaders and key contacts to raise the expectation of higher achievement not only for students, but as a community as well. All stakeholder groups report that the school culture is now one which supports a focus on individual student needs, both academically and emotionally. Students view their school as a true source of inspiration, guidance, and pathway to career opportunities.

The school has used various student activities and organizations to engaged community leaders and parents. Where once, extra-curricular activities were limited in scope and number, the school now offers a wide cadre of opportunities for student engagement, including JROTC, dance, choral, a full athletic schedule, and student clubs and organizations. In conjunction with the school's 75-hour service requirement for each student, the school provides help placing students in summer jobs in the community. The school also regularly surveys parents and community members on various topics to gather input, but also to promote engagement. Parents and community leaders report the increased collaboration opportunities with school leadership. Regular PTSA, local School Council, and various booster club meetings promote a positive conversation with the school. Much of the discussion of local school council meetings over the last two years has been about the school environment. Meeting agendas, handbooks, and data clearly show the school is continually using measurable ways to document its efforts toward student achievement and success.

Students report that teachers are always available, even before and after school hours, to provide tutoring, counseling, and other support services. The school's "I Am Accountable" campaign emphasizes the change in the learning environment. The school is organized into small learning academies so that students have the support of adults on a more individual basis. Thus, accountability is personalized and students have more chance of being successful. The implementation of the Project Graduation program invites a partnership with the local college community for a continued focus on higher student achievement.

A positive school culture, especially in an inner city environment, is critical to carrying out the educational purpose and vision of the school. A focus on opportunities and setting high academic expectations is paramount to establishing a learning environment which lifts students from their everyday lives to a world where barriers can be torn down and they can realize their dreams and goals. Furthermore, such a positive school culture promotes a climate where teachers and staff members feel safe to experience the rewarding benefits of making a difference in the lives of students. Parental and community engagement enhances the experience for students and provides a platform for accountability seen in successful organizations.

Standard 2: The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 2			
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student handbooks • Governing body policies, procedures, and practices • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	3.0
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Assurances, certifications • Interviews • Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies • Communications about program regulations 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of school leadership • School improvement plan developed by the school • Accreditation Report • Stakeholder input and feedback • Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation • Observations • Interviews 	3.0
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Survey results • Interviews • Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report • Examples of decisions in support of the school's continuous improvement plan 	3.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys • Survey responses • Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan • Communication plan • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	3.0
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation • Job specific criteria • Interviews 	3.0

Standard 3: The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student 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 to 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.

Standard 3			
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school'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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson plans • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Learning expectations for different courses • Posted learning objectives • Course schedules 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum guides • Common assessments • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum 	2.0
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development focused on these strategies • Authentic assessments • Observations • Accreditation Report 	2.0
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books • Supervision and evaluation procedures • Observations • Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	3.0
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Common language, protocols and reporting tools • Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees • Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings • Interviews 	3.0
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance • Accreditation Report 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs with references to school beliefs and values about teaching and learning • Interviews 	3.0
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Interviews • List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days • Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress • Accreditation Report 	3.0
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Interviews • Curriculum and activities of formal adult advocate structure 	3.0
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices • Interviews • Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting • Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of evaluation of professional learning program. • Evaluation tools for professional learning • Interviews • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Crosswalk between professional learning and school purpose and direction 	3.0
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Survey results • List of learning support services and student population served by such services • Accreditation Report • Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning • Data used to identify unique learning needs of students 	3.0

Standard 4: The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

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 30,000 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. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Documentation of highly qualified staff • Additional staffing from grant funding 	4.0
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • Survey results • School schedule • Interviews • Observations 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures. • System for maintenance requests 	3.0
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Observations • Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information 	3.0
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure • Observations • Assessments to inform development of technology plan • Interviews 	2.0
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student assessment system for identifying student needs • Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support • Survey results • Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills • Accreditation Report • Interviews • List of support services available to students • Observations 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning• Observations• Accreditation Report• Description of IEP process• Interviews	3.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The school offers a wide variety of opportunities for students to become actively engaged in the school program, to assume accountability for their own learning, and to obtain the skills and experiences necessary for future success.

4.6

During the two-year turn around period, the school has actively and intentionally sought ways to connect students with a larger purpose than just a mandatory requirement for school attendance. The school has passionately designed programs around engaging students in their own learning, helping them evaluate their own choices, and elevating their own self-worth. During interviews, older students cited the variety of opportunities they have now to be involved at school. The number of activities offered in various arenas such as fine arts, sports, and clubs has grown significantly. Additionally, the school now offers more rigorous courses including, but not limited to, a growing International Baccalaureate program that has become the school's fourth academy.

Students are provided counseling and assistance in finding summer jobs in order to provide constructive time opportunities and keep them off the streets during this vulnerable time. The 75-hour service requirement allows students an opportunity to further their skills and experiences in a practical application. Many more students are now involved in joint enrollment programs and attend local colleges and universities. In addition to the advanced rigor of these opportunities, students are able to see themselves successfully pursuing levels of higher education. The educational partnership with Emory University provides for learning opportunities in both academics and community services. Staff and community members, as well as students, are afforded the chance to participate in volunteer services through the university. The school's theme of "I am accountable" emphasizes personal responsibility for both students and staff members.

Student engagement is a key component in student success. Where students are engaged in their school and in their learning, barriers are often eliminated or reduced. Schools are in competition with attractive forces pulling students away from a focus on learning. When schools engage students in their own learning and in the school organization, students see value in their education, realize the skills necessary for future success, and achieve at a higher levels.

2. The school is effectively utilizing all of its human resources to maximize the academic, social, and emotional support for all students.

4.1

In addition to regular staff allotments from the district office, the school uses various grants to increase the amount of support positions. Although the school population is about 950 students, the number of staff support positions is astonishing. In addition to the typical staffing expected, the school has an attendance officer and dedicated secretary, a graduation coach, a school nurse, a registrar, a social worker, a school psychologist, a parent liaison, a College and Career advisor, three guidance counselors, six assistant principals/academy leaders, and content area specialists. Although no one or two of these is unusual, the collective total and coordination between these positions is impacting. Observations by the team concluded that the school is enviously well-staffed with positions that make a difference in the lives and success of students. Interviews further indicated that students are well aware of all the human resources available to them. Every student is specifically known by one or more adults in the building. The school's organization by small learning academies within the school give further support of the effective use of school staff.

Education is a people business and the relationship between adult and student is one of the most important factors leading to student success. When a school effectively provides support mechanisms around each of its students, there is greater likelihood that each student will be engaged and find success. Students bring to the schoolhouse many issues and challenges, especially those in inner city neighborhoods of high poverty and low wealth. As the school provides opportunity through caring and empathetic adults, students have a greater chance to be motivated by positive role models, relieved of burdens hindering educational progress, and encouraged to become independent learners.

Standard 5: The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Systems 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 5			
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols • Observations • Interviews • Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free 	3.0
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning • Observations • Accreditation Report 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data • Documentation of attendance and training related to data use • Observations • Accreditation Report • Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data 	3.0
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data • Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning • Accreditation Report • Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans • Evidence of student readiness for the next level • Evidence of student growth • Observations • Evidence of student success at the next level • Interviews 	3.0
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Communication plan regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders • Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	4.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The principal and leadership team consistently monitor and support the implementation of effective teaching practices designed to optimize student achievement and performance.

5.5

Interviews, observations, and documentation indicate that the school principal and leadership team systematically and continually review data, support teachers in the implementation of effective teaching strategies, and focus on student achievement. The leadership team meets at least weekly to discuss classroom observations, effective strategies, implementation by design, and achievement scores. With the large number of support staff, the leadership team is frequently physically monitoring classrooms with both formal observations and informal walk-throughs. There is a structured professional development plan in place where each Friday is designated as specific to the needs of individual teachers to further their skills, learn new techniques, or plan for new strategies. School personnel rely heavily on the district's data management programs of Thinkgate, USA Test Prep, and Study Island for a focus on relevant information. Leaders continually monitor student success and identify academic weaknesses with these tools. Common monthly benchmarks are given in each content area.

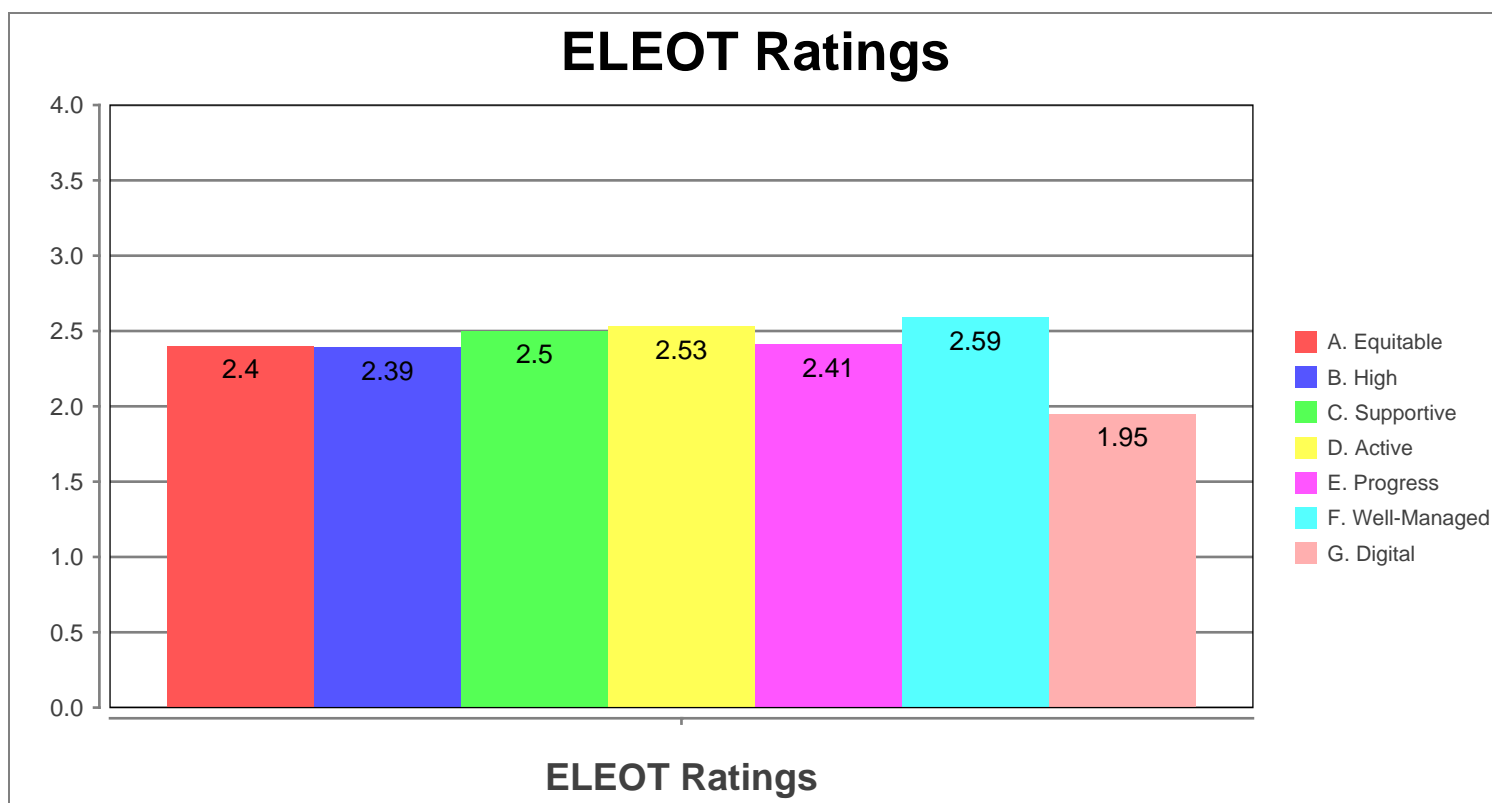
Subsequently, the review of data are used to determine scheduling decisions and staffing needs. Students who are identified are placed in appropriate remediation programs such as Read 180, after-school tutorials, and Flexible Learning. All professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation and interpretation of data. Professional development requirements in the school help sustain the appropriate use of the data to promote student achievement. The school provides common planning times by subject area to help support and organize for effective professional development activities. The principal and leadership team demonstrate a prevailing expectation for all instructional personnel.

For continuous growth, inspection of what school leaders expect must be a part of the systemic and systematic plan for improvement. Only when there is reasonable accountability to fully implement with fidelity effective teaching practices will those practices become pervasive throughout the school and students receive the maximum benefit. Monitoring data without the support of related professional development initiatives or having high expectations without the subsequent accountability piece only lead to random acts of improvement at best. Sustained improvement and growth must be supported with ongoing review of results and the appropriate, well taught use of effective strategies.

Learning Environment

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. External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.



Student Performance

Student Performance on assessments is the second of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze student performance data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the assessments used by the institution, the degree to which the institution properly administered the assessments, analyzed and acted on the results, and the overall performance of students using a set of rubrics. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Student Performance Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Assessment Quality	3.0
Test Administration	4.0
Quality of Learning	4.0
Equity of Learning	3.0

Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys are directly correlated to the AdvancED Accreditation 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 and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Stakeholder Feedback Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Questionnaire Administration	1.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.0

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

The External Review Team conducted an on-site review of Maynard Holbrook Jackson High School May 13-15, 2014. Beginning with an informal dinner with key stakeholders on the first evening and through the exit report, the team was provided with hospitality, access to stakeholders, documentation, and cooperation by everyone involved. Unfortunately, the review was held on the week before the last week of school, which at a high school level presents many scheduling challenges. The school, however, was most accommodating in all aspects of the review. The principal and members of the leadership team are commended for their treatment and availability to the team.

The school provided a Self Assessment that honestly reflected their perception and evaluation of the school and its contents and ratings were widely agreed upon by the team. The team interviewed 59 participants, including 15 teachers, 14 students, and 15 parents and community leaders.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

The school has undergone a tremendous revitalization over the last two years. The new principal and leadership team have intentionally changed the learning environment at the school to one of collaboration, academic focus, and support for the needs of students. Overall, each of the Standards for accreditation are being met and translated into positive changes within the school. There is a clearly defined and communicated focus on the purpose and direction for the school. The leadership in the school is collaborative and provides for effective and efficient operation of all aspects of the school environment. The principal has taken the initiative to seek out funding sources which provide additional support staff with the goal of increasing student achievement and the graduation rate. Students receive academic and emotional support through several programs within the school. The school leadership is proactive in the use and monitoring of data to improve instruction. This information is regularly communicated to all stakeholders including the district office, parents, staff, students, and community leaders.

Now that the learning environment has changed, the school is in the beginning stages of using data and effective strategies to impact instructional practices in classrooms. Some teachers have taken those initial efforts and begun to employ more effective instructional strategies; however, this was not observed to be the prevalent practice throughout the school. As teachers take more ownership and use data to impact instructional decisions at the classroom level, students will benefit from more rigorous content and instruction. As strategies change, students will become more engaged and responsible for their own learning.

Although, the school has some technology resources, the team observed only limited use of these tools in classrooms and no use of it by students. With the school's goal of preparing students to compete in a global

society, the appropriate and effective use of technology by students will be a significant component of that learning.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

The classrooms that were observed were orderly and well-managed. Students were mostly attentive and most were on task during the observations. Teachers were supportive of students' efforts and responses, and students expressed positive attitudes to the instruction. The team did not see many examples of high quality work or exemplars in classrooms. The observations yielded few examples of higher rigor in terms of content, questioning, or assignments. The observations also showed little use of instructional technology, even by teachers, let alone by students. The self assessment cited that every classroom had seven desktop computers along with access to mobile carts. Other than computer labs, the team saw no classrooms with that many desktop computers and observed none of the mobile carts in use.

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 criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED is introducing a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduces an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; 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.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and Indicators; the Analysis of Student Performance; and the Engagement and Involvement of Stakeholders. Within each domain institutions will be able to 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 can be a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Required Action as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected Indicator.

The IEQ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. Your institution's IEQ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Your actions for improvement that have a positive impact will be reflected in your IEQ score.

IEQ Institutional Score: 297

Teaching and Learning Impact: 295
(Standards 3 and 5; Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 291
(Standards 1 and 2; Stakeholder Engagement Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 314
(Standard 4)

The External Review team recommends that Maynard Holbrook Jackson High School be accredited by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission for a five-year term of accreditation.

Improvement Priority

1. Promote and monitor the implementation of increased instructional rigor in all classrooms to ensure that students have access to engaging, relevant, and standards-driven learning opportunities.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

3.3 Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.

Description:

Classroom observations showed some evidence that instructional rigor was a priority in most classrooms; however, this was not found to be a pervasive focus throughout the school. Although content standards were posted in all classrooms and there was some indication through interviews with teachers and leadership that this was a topic of ongoing discussion in professional development efforts, school-wide implementation was not evident. Several classrooms were observed using typical paper-pencil worksheets and there was little to observe regarding higher order thinking skills, project based activities, or student centered learning. Although students were complimentary of the support they received from teachers, no one indicated increased rigor except in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes. From the Self Assessment and staff interviews there is an awareness of an expectation of increased rigor; there was little evidence that it is being translated into every classroom.

All students should be exposed to increased rigor in all content areas. From the three R's of Rigor, Relevance and Relationships, all must be in balance and when any one of them is lacking, the impact on student learning and student achievement suffers. For school improvement to be meaningful, all students must be exposed to a greater level of content rigor and expectations. Not only do high achieving students deserve this opportunity, but all students should experience a greater depth of knowledge through the activities of the classroom.

Higher order thinking skills, depth of questioning, and student centered activities promote the type of experiences necessary for students to master the skills necessary to be successful in a global society.

2. Provide appropriate and ongoing professional development in the effective use of instructional technology for all classroom teachers.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

4.5 The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.

Description:

As cited in the school's Self Assessment, the use of instructional technology is an area for improvement. The Self Assessment reported that teachers had access to seven desktop computers in every classroom, but observations by the team did not find this to be the case. During classroom observations, the team saw little use of any technology and when it did occur, the devices were only used in their most rudimentary form. There was little evidence of any student use of instructional technology. In the Self Assessment, the school indicated

a plan to implement two paperless instructional days per week so that students could learn to compete in 21st century classrooms. Teachers did report that technology was available and that it was being used. Students reported that most technology use was done during various formal assessments. In order to effectively move in this direction, more targeted teacher training will be necessary to support this endeavor.

In order to compete on a global scale, technology is critical to today's learner. Students have great access to various forms of technology in their everyday lives. Teachers who fully utilize technology as a tool expand the scope and depth of learning to give students more opportunity to prepare for a global world. Teachers only use the tools they are most comfortable with and technology is a prime example. Ongoing professional development to support the use of available technology is necessary to provide that 21st century classroom experience.

3. Utilize student performance data to deepen the impact of effective research-based instructional practices in all classrooms.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

3.2 Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.

Description:

Interviews, artifacts, and observations support that the school is rich in data information. Additionally, the data are being critically analyzed by the school leadership and professional development activities are being designed to increase student learning and assessment results. The leadership team is collecting and monitoring data, but interviews and observations indicate that there is yet little ownership by teachers to make changes in their instructional practice except for compliance. However, interviews showed that teachers only occasionally used data to significantly change their instructional strategies. Observations supported this finding that there was limited use of impactful research-based strategies beyond a perfunctory level. The school is in the beginning stages of getting teachers to understand and effectively use data to guide and impact actual instructional practices.

Most schools have data from various sources. However, unless the lowest level practitioner embraces the accountability of using this information to make changes in everyday practice, then the data serve only a summative purpose. When data are analyzed by the teacher to develop appropriate conclusions and subsequently devise a specific plan of action to differentiate instruction, this is a power practice which positively impacts student learning and achievement.

Follow up in discovering how data information is changing specific instructional practice is a key to continual and effective improvement efforts.

Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:

Mr. Ken Clouse

Team Member:

Dr. Walter Burke

Dr. Darrell Daniel

Dr. Ebony T. Lee

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. 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 complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that confers accreditation upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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 joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, these divisions share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

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Report of the
External Review Team
for
South Atlanta School of Computer
Animation & Design

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Date: February 24, 2015 - February 25, 2015



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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 Review Team began its work at South Atlanta School of Computer Animation and Design on Monday evening, February 23, 2015, with a presentation by the Leadership Team on how the school had accomplished its work during the self-study. The team was composed of five educators from various systems and cities in the state of Georgia. On Tuesday, February 24, the team visited 15 classrooms and interviewed students, teachers, support staff, and parents/community members. The team also reviewed the artifacts that the school provided and had discussions about the trends we had observed.

Prior to the team's visit to the school, each member read the school's Executive Summary and Self Assessment documents and began to develop ideas for powerful practices, improvement priorities, and opportunities for improvement. The team, during its deliberations, came to consensus with regards to these statements.

The team would like to thank the school for its hospitality during the onsite visit. The school did an outstanding job preparing for the external review by being very transparent in their deliberations and including all stakeholders in the process. The school conducted surveys of the various stakeholder groups and utilized the data from these in developing their self assessment. Through the team's interviews it was determined that all

groups participated in the internal review process.

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
Administrators	1
Instructional Staff	19
Support Staff	9
Students	12
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	7
Total	48

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 school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The school's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	3.00	2.88
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	3.00	2.53
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	3.00	2.67
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.00	2.78
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	3.00	2.63
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	3.00	2.66
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	3.00	2.58
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	2.00	3.12

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	3.00	3.07
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	3.00	2.77
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	3.00	2.57
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.00	2.71

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.00	2.72
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.	3.00	2.44
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	3.00	2.09
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	3.00	2.53
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	3.00	2.78

Student Performance Diagnostic

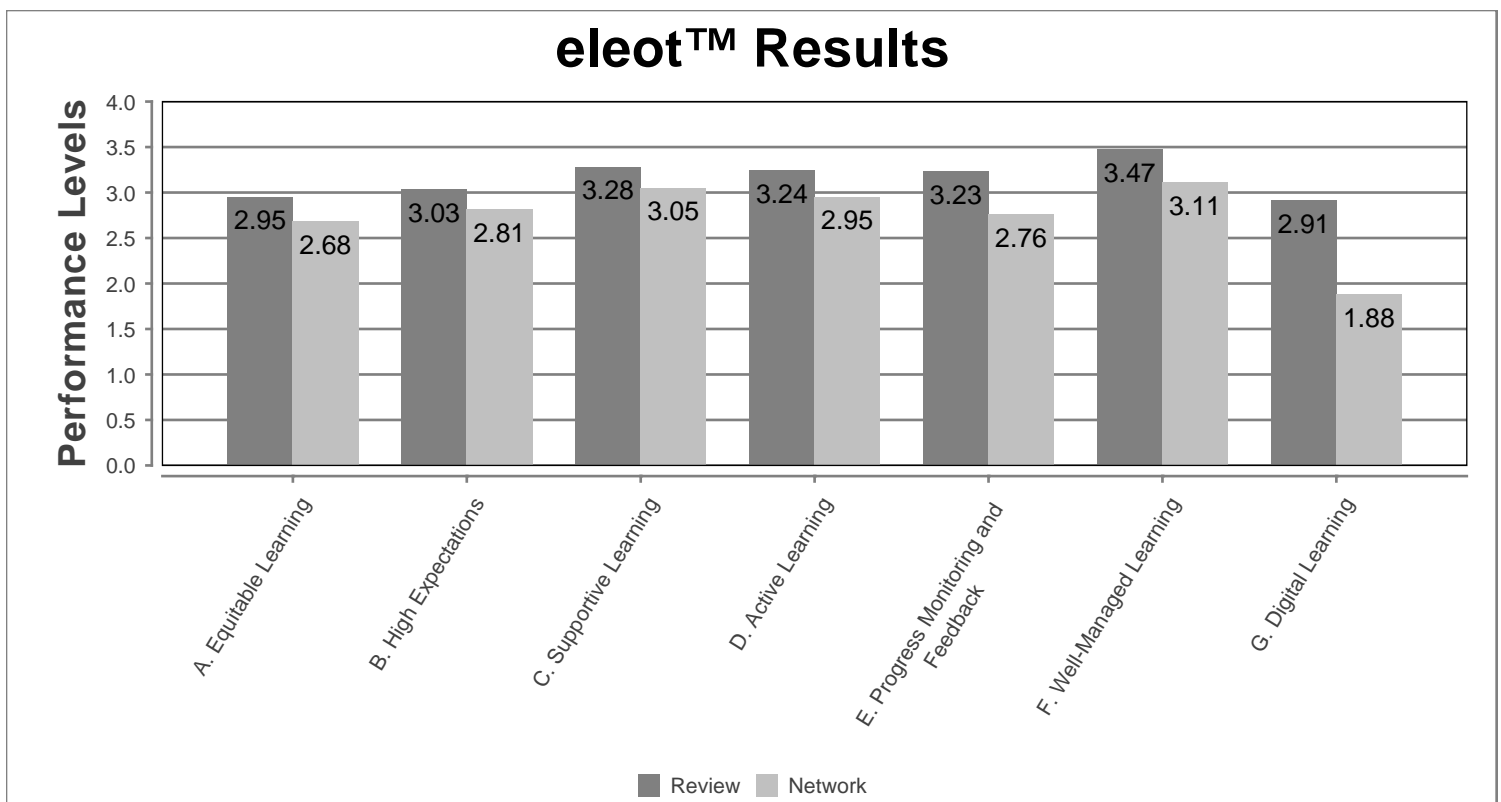
The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	4.00	3.10
Test Administration	4.00	3.47
Equity of Learning	3.00	2.74
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.98

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

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



The Review Team conducted 15 classroom observations. The Team did not observe students in four classes due to teacher absence. Overall, students were engaged in their work and were knowledgeable about the class rules and procedures. Interactions between students and teachers and peers were respectful and supportive and students demonstrated a positive attitude toward learning. The Well-Managed and Supportive Learning Environments were rated highest.

The environments Digital Learning and Equitable Learning were scored the lowest. Students usage of digital tools to gather and use information for learning was varied in classrooms. Differentiated learning opportunities and equal access to classroom discussions was not found to be consistent among classrooms.

However, all Learning Environments were found to be above the AdvancED Network Averages.

In the Well-Managed Learning Environment, students were found to be very respectful to both their teachers and peers. During observations of student centered activities, the Team observed collaboration among students as they worked to solve problems. Students also engaged in discussions with their teachers and peers. Providing students with exemplars of quality work was an area of need that was observed in standards-based classrooms.

The team was impressed with the students' engagement in their classroom activities and challenging tasks that were provided for them. While Digital Learning and Equitable Learning Environments were scored the lowest, both were still above the AdvancED Network Averages.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.87	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	33.33%	40.00%	6.67%	20.00%
2.	3.67	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	73.33%	20.00%	6.67%	0.00%
3.	3.20	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	53.33%	26.67%	6.67%	13.33%
4.	2.07	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	20.00%	20.00%	6.67%	53.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.95						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.27	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	40.00%	46.67%	13.33%	0.00%
2.	3.60	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	60.00%	40.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	2.20	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	26.67%	20.00%	0.00%	53.33%
4.	3.00	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	20.00%	66.67%	6.67%	6.67%
5.	3.07	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	40.00%	40.00%	6.67%	13.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.03						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.27	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	33.33%	60.00%	6.67%	0.00%
2.	3.47	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	53.33%	40.00%	6.67%	0.00%
3.	3.13	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	46.67%	33.33%	6.67%	13.33%
4.	3.60	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	73.33%	20.00%	0.00%	6.67%
5.	2.93	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	33.33%	46.67%	0.00%	20.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.28						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.60	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	60.00%	40.00%	0.00%	0.00%
2.	2.67	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	33.33%	26.67%	13.33%	26.67%
3.	3.47	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	53.33%	40.00%	6.67%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.24						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.33	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	46.67%	46.67%	0.00%	6.67%
2.	3.33	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	46.67%	46.67%	0.00%	6.67%
3.	3.33	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	46.67%	46.67%	0.00%	6.67%
4.	3.00	Understands how her/his work is assessed	33.33%	46.67%	6.67%	13.33%
5.	3.13	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	40.00%	46.67%	0.00%	13.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.23						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.67	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	80.00%	6.67%	13.33%	0.00%
2.	3.47	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	60.00%	26.67%	13.33%	0.00%
3.	3.27	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	53.33%	26.67%	13.33%	6.67%
4.	3.47	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	66.67%	20.00%	6.67%	6.67%
5.	3.47	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	60.00%	26.67%	13.33%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.47						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.13	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	46.67%	33.33%	6.67%	13.33%
2.	2.73	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	40.00%	26.67%	0.00%	33.33%
3.	2.87	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	33.33%	40.00%	6.67%	20.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.91						

Findings

Opportunity for Improvement

Identify ways that the three pathway schools within South Atlanta can collaborate to unify the groups and eliminate unhealthy rivalries.

(Indicators 3.5)

Evidence and Rationale

South Atlanta is unique in that there are three different pathway schools with the one school building. A review of the Accreditation Report, reviews of artifacts, and interviews with parents and students indicated everyone involved in the schools desire more collaboration among the three pathways.

Collaborating with the different pathway schools would aid in student success and provide opportunities for unification.

Powerful Practice

Advisory groups meet twice weekly, creating times when students and staff develop relationships so that students are known and valued.

(Indicators 3.9)

Evidence and Rationale

A review of the Accreditation Report, reviews of artifacts, and stakeholder interviews revealed that the advisory group times have proven beneficial for both students and staff.

The advisory times allow teachers to better understand their student's needs and guide them into successful

practices.

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 school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction 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 school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	3.00	2.75
1.2	The school's leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	3.00	3.04
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.00	2.61

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 school.	3.00	2.98
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.00	2.96
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	3.00	3.18
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	3.00	3.13
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	2.00	2.82
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	3.00	2.82

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

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

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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.38
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00	3.08

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop and implement a plan that creates more opportunities for parental involvement in all aspects of the school.

(Indicators 2.5)

Evidence and Rationale

Parent interviews revealed that school has begun to solicit their input. The leadership team also shared with the team its efforts to involve parents and other stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Involving parents and other stakeholders in various opportunities at the school will help the school to implement its vision and mission.

Powerful Practice

The administration and staff provide clear direction for the instructional program, provide opportunities for staff and students to grow and improve, and support staff and students in reaching the mission of the school.

(Indicators 1.2, 2.4)

Evidence and Rationale

During interviews, the Team found evidence that all stakeholder groups credited the administration for providing effective leadership and guidance to improve the school. The Team also determined that the principal, who is completing her first year in the role, has developed a culture that directly promotes the school's mission and beliefs. Parents and students further indicated that the one uniting strength of the school was the principal and her guidance in setting the tone for improvement.

A strong school leader is essential to the success of a school.

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 school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	3.00	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	3.00	3.00
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.00	3.11
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	3.00	2.83
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.00	2.56

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	3.00	2.89
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	3.00	2.80

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop and implement a technology plan that addresses improving the school's problems with connectivity. (Indicators 4.5)

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with students, teachers, and administrators affirmed that the school has continued to experience problems with reliable connections to the Internet. Additionally, when the Review Team conducted eleot™ observations, teachers and students had connectivity problems.

In order for teachers and students to be productive in a classroom where up-to-date information is needed, reliability with technology is imperative.

Opportunity for Improvement

Evaluate the school safety plan and revise if necessary to ensure that persons outside the school do not gain access into the school area.

(Indicators 4.3)

Evidence and Rationale

During interviews, students revealed that overall they felt safe and the Team noted that the attendance rate was 97% daily. However, there have been times when other school age individuals have entered the campus, making the current students feel uncomfortable.

It is imperative that all steps be taken to ensure student safety at all times.

Conclusion

The principal has developed a culture that promotes togetherness and striving for excellence by both staff and students. Attendance by students has been made a priority, resulting in a 97% attendance rate. Common planning time for teachers has allowed teachers to meet on a weekly basis to discuss the needs of students.

The school realized that parent involvement was a critical need. As a result, the school employed a parent liaison whose main focus is to promote parent involvement and communication. Continued emphasis in this area will result in increased parent communication and student success.

The school also recognized that the technology infrastructure is a major concern. In order to ensure student success in a school that emphasizes computer animation and design, the infrastructure must be addressed.

The school has made great strides in its efforts to promote student success. The school is no longer recognized as a priority school by the state of Georgia and by continuing to emphasize continuous improvement, the school will achieve greater student success.

Improvement Priorities

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

- Develop and implement a plan that creates more opportunities for parental involvement in all aspects of the school.
- Develop and implement a technology plan that addresses improving the school's problems with connectivity.

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	300.00	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	304.76	274.14
Leadership Capacity	300.00	296.08
Resource Utilization	285.71	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

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Mr. Bruce A Forbes	Mr. Forbes is a retired educator with 31 years of experience, having taught physical science in the ninth grade and served as an assistant principal and principal in both middle school and elementary school. All of his experience occurred in Habersham County, Georgia. He has served on numerous review teams at both the school and district level. Mr. Forbes received his Bachelor of Science undergraduate degree and his Masters of Education degree from North Georgia College (University of North Georgia), and his Specialist in Education, Administration/Supervision, from Clemson University.
Mrs. Sarah Cainion	Sarah Cainion is an elementary school principal in Clayton County Public Schools in Jonesboro, Georgia with 13 years of administrative experience. She received her Bachelors of Science Degree in Middle Grades Education from Fort Valley State University, Masters of Education Degree in Educational Leadership from City University in Bellevue, Washington and her Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from Central Michigan University. She began her teaching career in the Edmonds School District in the suburbs of Seattle, Washington where she taught second through fifth grade. She worked as an assistant principal for five years in the Fulton County School District before becoming a principal in Clayton County Public Schools. She has been an out of state teacher recruiter, district level curriculum leader and district diversity team trainer. She is also an elementary mentor principal for Clayton County Public Schools.
Dr. Keisha Cook	Keisha Cook is a native of Columbus, Georgia where she completed her formal education through the Muscogee County School District. Upon graduation from Georgia Southern University with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, she returned to Muscogee County School District to start a career in Education. Keisha taught middle school for 4 years and high school for 7 years at her alma mater before moving into her current position as an Instructional Coach at George Washington Carver High School.
Dr. Judy C Forbes	Judy Forbes has served on the SACS Elementary Commission and chaired it for two three-year terms. She retired in June 2008 from Habersham County Schools where she taught for 35 years. She taught high school, middle school, and elementary English/language arts. Dr. Forbes has also taught special education at all three levels as well. She served as Director of Special Education, Curriculum Director, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent. She has also taught adjunct classes in leadership at Piedmont College and is now a staff member for the University of Phoenix. Dr. Forbes has served as a Director and Past Chairman of the Habersham Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Habersham Medical Center Foundation Board, and is active in the Clarkesville United Methodist Church. Dr. Forbes holds four professional degrees, including the doctorate, from the University of Georgia. Dr. Forbes is a Field Consultant for Georgia Advanced and has been lead evaluator for many schools and systems.

Member	Brief Biography
Ms. Brandee Murrah	<p>Brandee Murrah currently serves as the department chair of Lamar County's College and Career Academy in Barnesville, Georgia. Ms. Murrah has 21 years of educational experience, where currently, she is the instructor for the Education and Training pathway. Prior to this experience, she has served as the Coordinator for the Summer School Programs, selected as an Emerging Leaders participant of RESA, elected a member of Lamar County's Superintendent's Council, and a member of Lamar County's Leadership Team. Over the years, she has taught Math, Science, Language arts, and History at the middle school, and Geometry, Math I, Math II, SAT preparatory classes at the high school. She has a Bachelor's degree in Science (majoring in Middle Grades Education), Master's degree in Educational Leadership, Specialist's degree in Educational Leadership, and is in the dissertation phase of her Ph.D.</p>

Next Steps

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

About AdvancED

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

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

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

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Report of the
External Review Team
for
South Atlanta High School of Health &
Medical Sciences

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Date: February 24, 2015 - February 25, 2015



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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 AdvancED External Review for South Atlanta High School of Health and Medical Sciences was conducted on February 24, 2015. The five-member team arrived on site on the evening of February 23 and conducted its first work session. The on-site portion of the External Review was scheduled to be completed over a two-day period, February 24 and 25, but due to inclement weather Atlanta Public Schools (the governing body of SAHSH&MS) closed on February 25. Therefore the work sessions scheduled for February 25 were conducted electronically and over the phone. The External Review Team began preparation for this visit in early January 2015. Through electronic meetings and communications, team members studied and analyzed the school's Accreditation Report, website, and other evidences provided by the school. Team members focused on the AdvancED Standards and Indicators and listed evidences and artifacts that were needed to ensure the school's ratings accurately reflected their work. The Lead Evaluator communicated with the school on a regular basis from January 6 through February 19, 2015. During the review team members examined artifacts and conducted multiple observations to confirm the school's adherence to AdvancED Standards and Indicators. The school was somewhat prepared for the review and organized artifacts both electronically and in paper copy. The leadership team acknowledged many aspects of improvement that the Internal Review and Accreditation Report had revealed.

The External Review Team would like to thank the staff and stakeholders for their kindness throughout the visit. Appreciation is given to the parents and grandparents of SAHSH&MS students for participating in the interview portion of the review.

South Atlanta High School of Health and Medical Sciences conducted AdvancED surveys of all stakeholders, completed their own Internal Review, and collected and categorized artifacts to demonstrate compliance with Standards and Indicators.

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
Administrators	1
Instructional Staff	22
Support Staff	9
Students	57
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	9
Total	98

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 school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The school'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.	2.80	2.88
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	2.00	2.53
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.00	2.67
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.40	2.78
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	2.60	2.63
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.20	2.66
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	3.00	2.58
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	2.00	3.12

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	2.80	3.07
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	3.00	2.77
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	3.00	2.57
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.00	2.71

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.20	2.72
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.	1.80	2.44
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	2.00	2.09
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	1.80	2.53
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	2.00	2.78

Student Performance Diagnostic

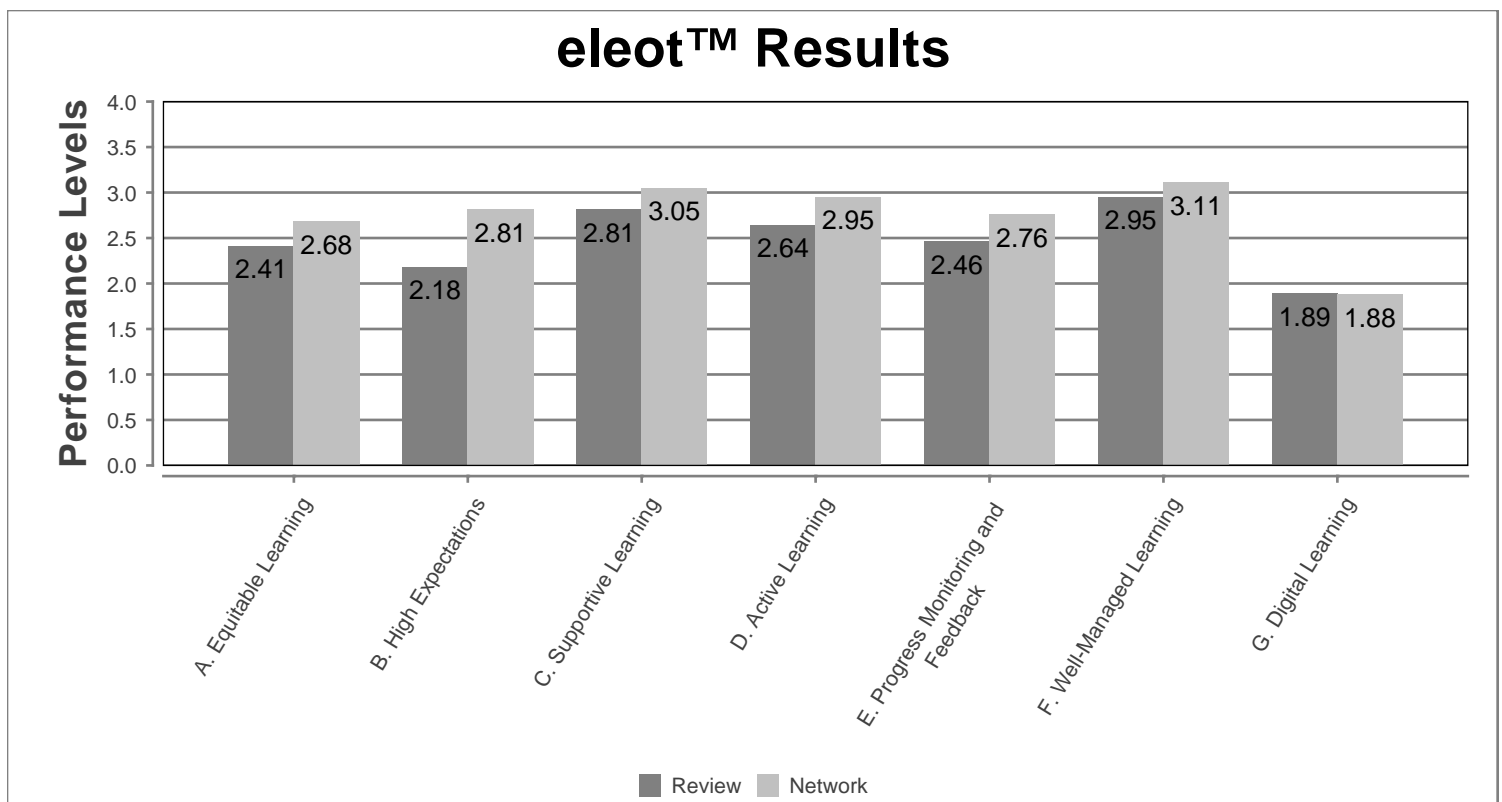
The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	4.00	3.10
Test Administration	3.00	3.47
Equity of Learning	3.00	2.74
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.98

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.



On February 24, 2015, team members conducted thirty-eight classroom observations using the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool. The highest scores were recorded in the areas of well-managed and supportive learning environments. Both of these scores (2.96 and 2.82) are lower than the AdvancED network averages of 3.09 and 3.03 respectively. Although the digital learning environment received the lowest of the scores, it was .01 higher than the AdvancED network average of 1.88. All other learning environments were

between .27 and .60 points below network averages. The greatest difference between the school and network averages was in the high expectations environment.

The majority of the classrooms were well-managed and students were provided positive support to accomplish the tasks set before them. Student work was monitored and feedback was provided to assist students in understanding curriculum content. Some classrooms utilized student data charts to monitor success in standards. Teachers across the school used a standards-based instructional framework which provided a sense of stability and continuity from classroom to classroom. Common assessments were in place to encourage optimum standards mastery for all students.

The school has ample resources to achieve its goals. Although electronic bandwidth can be challenging, a wide variety of digital programs is available for student use and for educational achievements. Thematic pathways are offered effectively and some programs are shared between this school and the other two high schools on the campus of South Atlanta High. Numerous individuals serve as support resources. Some staff members serve the Health and Medical Science High School exclusively while others serve all three schools. Students at SAHSH&MS receive services from a counselor, a social worker, a graduation coach, a discipline monitor, a home liaison, an instructional coach, and a behavior specialist.

Although students appeared willing to meet the expectations of their teachers, very little challenging and higher-order thinking was witnessed. Questions were asked at the lowest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, and very little rigor was seen. Minimal use of high-impact instructional strategies including differentiation was observed throughout the building. Even when teachers had students divided into work groups, each group was given the same assignment. Very little connection of learning to real-life situations occurred.

Interviews and reviews of artifacts demonstrated a minimal amount of vertical and horizontal articulation within the school. While common assessments are created and used, there appears to be little professional collaboration regarding the use of data from these assessments. With its small student body size, the school is positioned to maximize the use of staff collaboration to realize marked improvement in student achievement.

South Atlanta High School of Health and Medical Sciences provides its students with a clean and safe environment staffed by conscientious individuals who desire to see graduates succeed.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	1.76	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	7.89%	21.05%	10.53%	60.53%
2.	3.32	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	44.74%	44.74%	7.89%	2.63%
3.	2.95	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	18.42%	57.89%	23.68%	0.00%
4.	1.63	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	7.89%	15.79%	7.89%	68.42%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.41						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.53	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	18.42%	31.58%	34.21%	15.79%
2.	2.47	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	15.79%	36.84%	26.32%	21.05%
3.	1.97	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	18.42%	13.16%	15.79%	52.63%
4.	2.18	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	10.53%	26.32%	34.21%	28.95%
5.	1.76	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	5.26%	21.05%	18.42%	55.26%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.18						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.11	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	34.21%	44.74%	18.42%	2.63%
2.	3.21	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	44.74%	36.84%	13.16%	5.26%
3.	2.82	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	31.58%	36.84%	13.16%	18.42%
4.	2.63	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	18.42%	44.74%	18.42%	18.42%
5.	2.29	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	13.16%	31.58%	26.32%	28.95%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.81						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.76	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	26.32%	39.47%	18.42%	15.79%
2.	2.13	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	18.42%	26.32%	5.26%	50.00%
3.	3.03	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	31.58%	44.74%	18.42%	5.26%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.64						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.63	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	26.32%	34.21%	15.79%	23.68%
2.	2.55	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	23.68%	31.58%	21.05%	23.68%
3.	2.74	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	23.68%	39.47%	23.68%	13.16%
4.	2.16	Understands how her/his work is assessed	13.16%	31.58%	13.16%	42.11%
5.	2.24	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	21.05%	26.32%	7.89%	44.74%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.46						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.45	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	60.53%	28.95%	5.26%	5.26%
2.	3.21	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	44.74%	36.84%	13.16%	5.26%
3.	2.45	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	28.95%	23.68%	10.53%	36.84%
4.	2.37	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	18.42%	36.84%	7.89%	36.84%
5.	3.29	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	44.74%	42.11%	10.53%	2.63%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.95						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.05	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	18.42%	21.05%	7.89%	52.63%
2.	1.74	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	13.16%	10.53%	13.16%	63.16%
3.	1.87	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	15.79%	15.79%	7.89%	60.53%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.89						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Establish and implement meaningful opportunities to become engaged with the school and provide student achievement information to all stakeholders.

(Indicators 2.5, 3.8, 5.5)

Evidence and Rationale

All stakeholder groups reported extensive issues and concerns with effective communication. Some artifacts of communication were provided to the External Review Team, but the effectiveness of these tools was questionable. Inaccurate phone numbers and a lack of electronic medium in homes were noted as problematic. While reportedly regular parental programs are offered by the school, few parents attend. Parents and some staff members attested to having little or no input into school improvement planning or the accreditation process. Little school-wide information on student achievement has been communicated clearly to the school community.

Effective engagement of all stakeholders is key to building a positive school culture and improving student achievement.

Improvement Priority

Identify and implement a variety of research-based instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations for all students.

(Indicators 3.3)

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews and classroom observations provided ample documentation that use of varied instructional strategies is minimal. Differentiation of instruction was not observed in the majority of classes. Differentiation is key to student achievement, as students rarely learn in the same way or at the same time. Evidence revealed few instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of higher-order thinking skills. It was unclear if instructional strategies were in place that require students to apply knowledge and skills, integrate content and skills with other disciplines, and relate classroom learning to real-life application.

Teachers should have a firm understanding of a variety of effective research-based instructional practices to ensure that all students' individual learning needs are met.

Improvement Priority

Institute policies and procedures that clearly define and describe a process for analyzing data that determines improvement in student learning and includes readiness for success at the next level.

(Indicators 5.4)

Evidence and Rationale

The External Review Team found from reviews of artifacts, examination of the school's data room, and interviews with stakeholders that while data are being collected and some attempts are being made to organize that data, little evidence exists to demonstrate how that data are used to determine improvements either by individual student results or by groups of students. Formative data are not collected, shared, and disaggregated in a manner to facilitate improvements in instructional practices. Students would greatly benefit from processes and procedures utilized by staff to guide the instructional program.

Using data to guide instructional practices is a research-based method to aid student success and achievement.

Powerful Practice

Teachers at South Atlanta High School of Health and Medical Sciences effectively collaborate with teachers at the Computer Animation and Design High School of South Atlanta to create common assessments across curriculum areas.

(Indicators 3.10)

Evidence and Rationale

Reviews of artifacts and stakeholder interviews confirmed students at SAHSH&MS benefit from common assessments created by their teachers in conjunction with teachers from SAHSCAD. While these schools are separate entities, they are housed in the same facility providing an excellent opportunity for collaboration among professional staff. Teachers at these schools have availed themselves of this opportunity to provide students with common assessments as a measure of academic success.

Having common assessments across curriculum areas provides continuity of instruction and increased accountability for students.

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 school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction 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 school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	2.20	2.75
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	2.80	3.04
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	2.20	2.61

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 school.	2.80	2.98
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	2.20	2.96
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	2.60	3.18
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	2.20	3.13
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	1.60	2.82
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	2.20	2.82

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

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

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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.38
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00	3.08

Findings

Improvement Priority

Establish and implement meaningful opportunities to become engaged with the school and provide student achievement information to all stakeholders.

(Indicators 2.5, 3.8, 5.5)

Evidence and Rationale

All stakeholder groups reported extensive issues and concerns with effective communication. Some artifacts of communication were provided to the External Review Team, but the effectiveness of these tools was questionable. Inaccurate phone numbers and a lack of electronic medium in homes were noted as problematic. While reportedly regular parental programs are offered by the school, few parents attend. Parents and some staff members attested to having little or no input into school improvement planning or the accreditation process. Little school-wide information on student achievement has been communicated clearly to the school community.

Effective engagement of all stakeholders is key to building a positive school culture and improving student achievement.

Opportunity for Improvement

Develop, implement, and maintain a process to revise, review, and communicate the school's vision and mission to all stakeholders at least annually.

(Indicators 1.1)

Evidence and Rationale

From interviews with stakeholders and reviews of artifacts, the External Review Team determined that a

process for the regular review of the school's mission and vision was not formalized and documented. Documents revealed the last review was conducted in 2010. From meetings with parents, teachers, and support staff, it was evident that those stakeholders had limited input into development and/or revisions. The school and community would benefit from an inclusive effort to review, shape, and confirm the school's mission and vision to support the school's success.

The regular review of the school's mission and vision ensures active participation by all stakeholders and provides the opportunity for ownership of the school's goals and beliefs.

Opportunity for Improvement

Implement school-wide processes, policies, rituals, and routines that support and encourage inclusiveness for all stakeholders.

(Indicators 2.4)

Evidence and Rationale

The External Review Team found through reviews of artifacts and interviews with numerous stakeholders an inconsistent culture throughout the school. While the mission and vision focus on lifelong learning, problem solving, and community activism, little evidence was found to substantiate those beliefs. A lack of unity was evident among staff members and community involvement was not demonstrated. The written motto, "Creating a Culture of Consistency," was displayed throughout the facility. While some consistency was observed in classrooms such as the lesson plan framework and common assessments, many inconsistencies were observed throughout the school such as knowledge of procedures or routines by all stakeholders.

Developing and embracing a sense of inclusiveness for all stakeholders will lead to greater stakeholder involvement and ownership and pride in the school.

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 school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	2.80	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	2.80	3.00
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.00	3.11
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	2.80	2.83
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.00	2.56

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.80	2.89
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	2.80	2.80

Conclusion

South Atlanta High School of Health and Medical Sciences enjoys the close feel of a small school alongside the benefits of a larger campus. The school is located on the third floor of South Atlanta High and shares some common areas with two other themed high schools on the same campus. The school's gymnasium, cafeteria, and JROTC programs benefit students with facilities and programs that a small school would not afford.

Instruction across the school is formed around the same standards-based framework lending a sense of unity from classroom to classroom. Students also benefit from common assessments created to maximize student achievement of standards. Teachers are provided the opportunity to conduct peer observations in order to give and receive professional feedback on instructional practices. The school has developed an effective partnership with Emory College to provide mentors to students as they consider future careers in the health and medical sciences fields.

The principal of the school has adopted an open-door policy and students and teachers are free to discuss issues or concerns. The leadership of the school has the autonomy to make instructional decisions as they relate to the school providing effective control over day-to-day operations of the building. New teachers are provided mentors from the district as well as a mentor in the school. Support for new staff members assists them as they transition to the rituals and routines of the school.

Numerous support programs are in place for the students at South Atlanta High. While some of the support staff members are shared by all three of the high schools, others are solely assigned to SAHSH&MS. A school counselor, a social worker, a graduation coach, a behavior specialist, a discipline monitor, a parent liaison, and an instructional coach are samples of the support staff available to assist the students at the school.

The school also enjoys ample resources to support its instructional program. Instructional technology is more than adequate for the school although bandwidth within the infrastructure can be problematic. Students are also provided many digital programs and resources which they can leverage as remediation or acceleration.

The school is aware of the need to review and revise its current mission and vision. This should be done in the immediate future with broad stakeholder input and involvement. Every effort should be made to include parents, community members, school partners, and students as the vision for South Atlanta High Health and Medical Sciences moves into the future. The school should seek to maximize this guiding task to promote a sense of collaborative and inclusive culture for the school. The school would be wise to present a sense of accommodation to all stakeholders in order to promote ownership and pride in the school and ensure that all students are successful. Student achievement needs to be communicated clearly to all stakeholders and meaningful information about school improvement should be shared with all.

Leadership should immediately direct attention to the lack of research-based high-impact instructional strategies in the classroom. Large group instruction is necessary at times. However, for standards mastery to become the hallmark of the school, instructional strategies must focus on the individual student and his/her

achievement. Differentiation should be an immediate focus. Identifying similarities and differences, summarizing, cooperative learning, and generating and testing hypotheses are but a few of the strategies that teachers should be utilizing. Immediate attention should be given to connecting classroom instruction to real-world experiences, especially those in the fields of health and medical sciences. The use of digital technology should be maximized to enhance these goals. Teachers should work collaboratively both vertically and horizontally in more than creating common assessments. Analyzing work samples and cross-curricular planning will provide a basis for greater collaboration and ultimate student success.

The school should continue its efforts in data analysis and the use of data to inform instruction. While it is apparent that beginning steps are being taken to achieve this goal, a strong commitment from all stakeholders is needed to reap the benefits of using data to improve student learning. Formative data need to be utilized on a regular basis to drive the focus of individual instruction. This research-based practice is one of the most dramatic ways to improve student growth and achievement. The school and its students would benefit greatly from this emphasis.

The school should also consider collecting and analyzing data on the effectiveness of the student support structures in place at the school. This process would lend great strength in knowing which programs are most effective and need to be enhanced as well as which programs need to be improved for maximum student effectiveness.

The Improvement Priorities will provide a foundation upon which the school can continue to grow. The school has the capacity and the support to improve. The commitment of all stakeholders to the school will provide the basis for this improvement. South Atlanta High School of Health and Medical Sciences can become a leader in educating the health care professionals of tomorrow.

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:

- Establish and implement meaningful opportunities to become engaged with the school and provide student achievement information to all stakeholders.
- Identify and implement a variety of research-based instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations for all students.
- Institute policies and procedures that clearly define and describe a process for analyzing data that determines improvement in student learning and includes readiness for success at the next level.

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	260.00	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	260.00	274.14
Leadership Capacity	252.73	296.08
Resource Utilization	271.43	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

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Kay H Sledge	With over 34 years in public education, Ms. Kay Sledge retired as the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning of Clayton County Public Schools in Georgia. Over her career she served as a classroom teacher, guidance counselor, assistant principal, principal, executive director, assistant superintendent, and chief academic officer. She holds her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Tennessee, two Master's Degrees and two Educational Specialist Degrees in School Counseling and in Educational Leadership and Supervision from the University of West Georgia. She has worked closely with AdvancEd for over 16 years and has served on numerous external reviews for both individual schools and school systems. Currently Ms. Sledge serves as a Lead Evaluator for Georgia schools..
Ms. Natrina Shenae Jones	Born in West Palm Beach, Florida, a few decades ago, allow me introduce Natrina Jones. Currently, she is an innovative educator inspiring to become an administrator. She reside in Ellenwood, GA and works in Dunwoody, GA. She's been an educator at various capacities during her 17 years in Education. She earned her undergraduate degree in Elementary Education and completed her Master's degree in Educational Leadership (k-12). In closing, her passion for teaching and learning will take her to unimaginable places.
Mrs. Carolyn G Randolph	She is a native of North Carolina. Nineteen years of teaching experience on the secondary and post secondary levels. Nineteen years of teaching in the state of Georgia as a mathematics teacher and Academic Coach/School Improvement Specialist for the past six years at Kendrick High School and adjunct math instructor at Columbus State University. Kendrick High School is a Title I school that received a School Improvement Grant based on the priority status. Serving as a leader in support and training of the teachers in the areas math and science, the priority status was removed in December 2014 because of improvement in test scores and graduation.

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Dr. Paula M Rufus</p>	<p>Dr. Paula M. Rufus began her public school career in 1987 as a middle school counselor in Osceola County, Kissimmee, Florida. Since then she has been afforded many opportunities to serve students and communities at the elementary, secondary, postsecondary, district, and state levels. Currently, Dr. Rufus is the Director of State and Federal Accountability for the Gainesville City School System in Gainesville, Georgia where she proudly supports the superintendent’s vision by providing leadership, guidance, and oversight over all aspects of the district’s state and federally funded instructional programs, and AdvancEd accreditation. One of the primary areas of focus for Dr. Rufus is building the capacity of instructional leaders by designing and administering professional development opportunities for school and district level educators and administrators.</p> <p>Prior to serving Gainesville City Schools, Dr. Rufus has served in leadership roles in other districts in the metro-Atlanta area including Hall, Gwinnett, and Barrow County school systems. Further, she has served as an Assessment Specialist for the Georgia Department of Education, where, as program manager for the End-of-Course Tests, she was responsible for managing all aspects of the program including contract, test development, standard setting, content and data reviews, administration procedures, professional development, scoring and reporting.</p> <p>Beyond her experiences as district and state administrator, Dr. Rufus has served as Research Associate and Adjunct Associate Professor for the University of West Florida (Applied Research and Diversity Studies), and currently serves as an external Evaluator, for J. W. Dobbs Elementary School’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. Finally, Dr. Rufus has served as a Peer Reviewer for the U. S. Department of Education reviewing federal grant applications for the department of Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality.</p> <p>Dr. Rufus’ educational background is as diverse as her professional experiences and interests, and includes the following:</p> <p>Doctor of Education, Curriculum and Instruction/Educational Management University of West Florida, Pensacola, Florida</p> <p>Educational Specialist, Curriculum & Instruction Emphasis: Educational Leadership University of West Florida, Pensacola, Florida</p> <p>Master of Science, Counseling Bachelor of Science, Business Administration Alabama State University, Montgomery, Alabama</p>
<p>Dr. Janet S. Welsh</p>	<p>In a long and varied career, Dr. Welsh has graduated from four universities in different states, worked in six different school districts in five states, and taught at three universities in different states. Her background includes teaching secondary mathematics, school counseling, and administration in school districts as small as 1,000 students, as large as 120,000 students, and more than a few in-between. She values the broader perspective she gained through these experiences. With a primary career focus in pupil services, she has worked tirelessly to support national standards for the delivery of school counseling services to all students. Dr. Welsh is a champion for the limitation of non-counseling duties in the daily activities of school counselors. Counselors’ focus must consistently be on supporting student achievement by addressing personal/social and career development issues that impede and support success.</p>

Next Steps

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

About AdvancED

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

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

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

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Report of the
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for
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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

During the off-site review, the Lead Evaluator met with the school's principal to gain insight on the day-to-day operations of the school and to tour the facility. The Lead Evaluator visited the school once to meet with members of the internal committee to discuss the required documentation and preparation for the visit. The Lead Evaluator was in constant contact with the principal prior to the visit via electronic messaging. The AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. The team reviewed the Accreditation Report prior to the visit. Prior to the official visit, the team met and discussed the information received from the school and the final submitted document.

The External Review was scheduled for February 24-25, 2015. The team was comprised of a Lead Evaluator and four other professionals. The team discussed ideas and information gained from the data received. The team noted that some of the artifacts listed as supporting documents were not readily accessible.

The External Review Team listened to presentations from the principal and staff where they described an overview of the school as it related to the AdvancED Standards. The principal profiled the school by presenting its longitudinal assessments results. The results were mixed; however, the principal highlighted the following: South Atlanta exceeded the district with the percent increase with the highest CCRPI score increase; Physical

Science EOCT scores increased from 75% in 2012-2013 to 89% in 2013-2014; and challenges still exist in the areas of mathematics and the percent of students scoring a three or above on the Advance Placement Exams.

The External Review Team began its work by meeting to discuss work that had been completed prior to the visit. Throughout the visit South Atlanta High School of Law and Social Justice responded to the team's queries and requests. The External Review Team interviewed 49 stakeholders which included the following: 1 administrator, 16 teachers, 5 support staff, 19 students, and 8 parents. Additionally, the team observed 18 classrooms to gain additional insight and perceptions of stakeholders regarding the school's adherence to the AdvancED Standards and the effectiveness of the school in meeting its mission and continuous improvement goals. The school was helpful in getting additional information for the team when needed. The team thanks the principal and special education instructor for their leadership and for everything they did to make the team feel welcome. The school's staff should be commended for their kind words and willingness to assist the team with all requests.

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
Administrators	1
Instructional Staff	16
Support Staff	5
Students	19
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	8
Total	49

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 school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The school'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	2.88
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	2.20	2.53
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.20	2.67
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.80	2.78
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	2.40	2.63
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.40	2.66
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	1.80	2.58
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	2.80	3.12

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	2.40	3.07
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.	2.20	2.77
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.00	2.57
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	1.60	2.71

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	1.80	2.72
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.	1.80	2.44
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	1.60	2.09
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	1.80	2.53
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	2.80	2.78

Student Performance Diagnostic

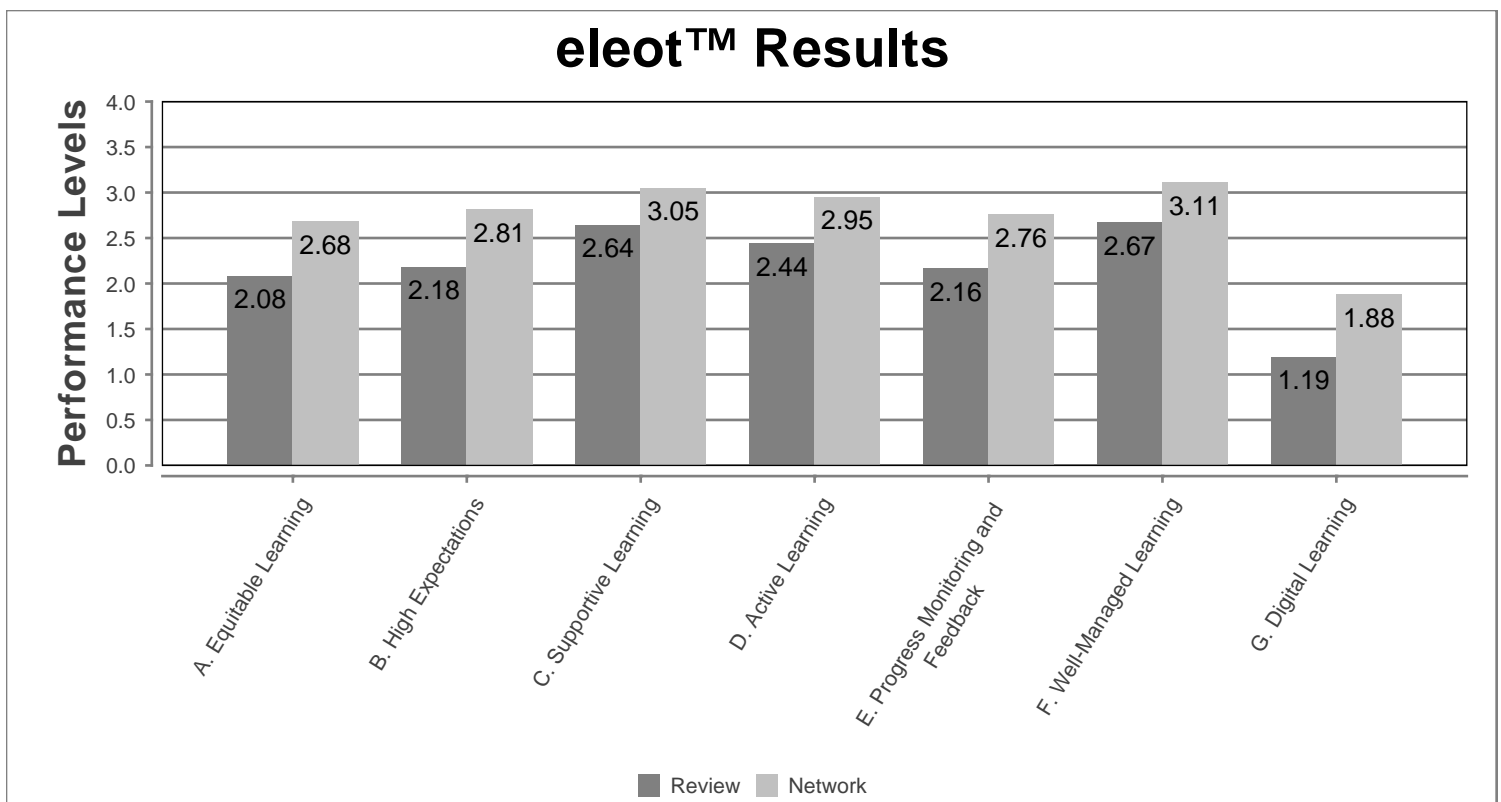
The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	1.00	3.10
Test Administration	3.00	3.47
Equity of Learning	3.00	2.74
Quality of Learning	2.00	2.98

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.



During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around the constructs or environments: Equity, High Expectations, Support, Engagement, Progress Monitoring and Feedback, Management, and Digital Environment.

A total of 18 classrooms were observed for a minimum of 20 minutes each during the review. All constructs within the overall learning environment were rated from a low of 1.19 to a high of 2.67. The team found that the classrooms were strongest in the Well Managed Learning Environment with a rating of 2.67. The AdvancED network average for this domain is 3.11. The team found that the Digital Learning Environment was the area most in need of improvement during the eleot observations with a rating of 1.19.

In the majority of the classes, it was evident that learning experiences were positive. The team noted that the students speak and interact respectfully with teachers and peers. It was observed that classroom rules were followed and students work well with others.

When students with basic needs are regularly met and who feel safe and valued by school staff are going to perform at higher levels. South Atlanta School of Law of Social Justice has created a culture that is student-centered and is an environment that is geared towards their growth. With technological upgrades properly applied, this and other constructs within the AdvancED observation instrument would likely rise and, more importantly, students would be enabled as 21st Century college/career ready.

During the observations, there was little evidence of differentiated instructional strategies. While it was noted through observations and interviews that there are after school tutorials and remediation, there remains the need to provide differentiation/remediation during the school day. The school was rated an average of 1.33 out of possible 4.0 in this area. This is further supported through the AdvancED Teaching and Assessing for Learning Standard.

There was evidence of effective learning environments. The team observed multiple levels of student engagement. It was noted that the students speak and interact respectfully with teachers and peers, and they follow classroom rules and work well with each other.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	1.33	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	0.00%	11.11%	11.11%	77.78%
2.	2.83	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	27.78%	38.89%	22.22%	11.11%
3.	2.72	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	27.78%	27.78%	33.33%	11.11%
4.	1.44	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	5.56%	5.56%	16.67%	72.22%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.08						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.44	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	11.11%	33.33%	44.44%	11.11%
2.	2.39	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	16.67%	27.78%	33.33%	22.22%
3.	1.83	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	5.56%	27.78%	11.11%	55.56%
4.	2.11	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	11.11%	22.22%	33.33%	33.33%
5.	2.11	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	16.67%	16.67%	27.78%	38.89%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.18						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.67	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	22.22%	33.33%	33.33%	11.11%
2.	2.83	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	27.78%	38.89%	22.22%	11.11%
3.	2.72	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	22.22%	38.89%	27.78%	11.11%
4.	2.89	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	33.33%	33.33%	22.22%	11.11%
5.	2.11	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	5.56%	38.89%	16.67%	38.89%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.64						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.61	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	22.22%	22.22%	50.00%	5.56%
2.	2.11	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	16.67%	16.67%	27.78%	38.89%
3.	2.61	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	22.22%	27.78%	38.89%	11.11%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.44						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.17	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	5.56%	38.89%	22.22%	33.33%
2.	2.56	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	16.67%	33.33%	38.89%	11.11%
3.	2.33	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	11.11%	27.78%	44.44%	16.67%
4.	1.56	Understands how her/his work is assessed	0.00%	11.11%	33.33%	55.56%
5.	2.17	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	11.11%	27.78%	27.78%	33.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.16						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.06	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	38.89%	38.89%	11.11%	11.11%
2.	3.00	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	44.44%	16.67%	33.33%	5.56%
3.	2.28	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	22.22%	16.67%	27.78%	33.33%
4.	2.17	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	16.67%	27.78%	11.11%	44.44%
5.	2.83	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	33.33%	22.22%	38.89%	5.56%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.67						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	1.22	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	0.00%	5.56%	11.11%	83.33%
2.	1.17	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	0.00%	5.56%	5.56%	88.89%
3.	1.17	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	0.00%	5.56%	5.56%	88.89%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.19						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop a plan to systematically and continuously use data analysis from a variety of sources to develop, implement, and evaluate individualized learning support services to meet the needs of all students. (Indicators 3.12)

Evidence and Rationale

Through interviews, observations, and examination of artifacts, it was noted by the team that while the school has experienced some marked gains in student achievement, particularly in closing the achievement gap, there is little evidence to demonstrate what plans were developed to close these gaps and how these plans were developed.

A more intentional plan to foster the use of data to identify areas of concern and develop strategies and /or structures to meet the individual or group needs of all students will aide in increasing student achievement.

Improvement Priority

Establish a formal continuous improvement process and train faculty and staff to ensure understanding and meaningful participation to include the following: implement a systematic collaborative process to revisit and clarify the school’s purpose/mission; systematically review and use findings of existing improvement plans and documents; create a comprehensive system to assess a broad array of student performance data and school effectiveness results; establish strategic, measurable improvement goals; build effective ways to implement strategies and measure progress in meeting those goals; and report results in terms of progress made in attaining the improvement goals and informing the next phases of improvement planning. (Indicators 1.3, 5.1, 5.4)

Evidence and Rationale

The school's evidence provided to the External Review Team included several existing improvement documents. These included the 2013-14 School Plan for Improving Student Support and Achievement, the 2014-15 Measurable Goals Identified for South Atlanta School of Law and Social Justice, the South Atlanta School of Law and Social Justice Profile for 2014-15, and the 2014-15 Title 1 School Wide School Improvement Plan.

Interviews with staff responsible for creating the school's Accreditation Self Assessment Report and with school stakeholders, especially teachers and parents, revealed minimal use of these existing documents to inform, frame, or guide school improvement activities. Interviews confirmed a lack of understanding by school staff regarding basic improvement process components, such as a rich, comprehensive set of valid student and school effectiveness data and rigorous data analysis (trend and comparability results) that are used to focus and create significant, measurable goals used to improve student performance and inform instructional strategies.

There was evidence from classroom observations and stakeholder interviews (all staff, students, parents) that many projects/initiatives to improve student learning and instructional practices are being implemented. Leaders and teachers are working hard, long hours on so many to help students. However, evidence also suggested little perceived linkage between some activities to a broader plan for improvement and the school's mission.

Critically important to building and sustaining a culture of improvement in any school is directly linking basic components such as why and what (data analysis and goals), how (strategies and implementation rigor), what happened (formative and summative evaluation, analysis of impact on student performance and school quality), and what happens next (analysis of results that guides the next cycle of planning for improvement).

Effective schools research clearly indicates that schools improve when leaders use systematic processes that meaningfully engage all school stakeholders and actively align planning with mission, action, and evaluation. Accreditation supports leaders to enact quality processes for continuous improvement that will provide clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.

Opportunity for Improvement

Provide professional development opportunities that supports instructional improvement and are consistent and inclusive across content areas and grade levels.

(Indicators 3.7)

Evidence and Rationale

It was evident through teacher interviews and artifacts that some professional development occurs within the school. However, it was not clear through interviews or artifacts of a structured plan for professional development that involves all school personnel. In addition, there was no clear evidence that the professional development provided is monitored for implementation and evaluation in the classroom.

Professional development activities that are aligned with the school's Improvement Plan and provide support to staff in meeting identified student achievement goals enhance teaching and learning.

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 school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction 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 school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	1.60	2.75
1.2	The school's leadership and staff 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.	2.00	3.04
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	1.40	2.61

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 school.	3.00	2.98
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.20	2.96
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	3.20	3.18
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	2.60	3.13
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	2.20	2.82
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	2.60	2.82

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	1.00	3.38
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00	3.08

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop and implement with fidelity a systematic, collaborative process that engages a broad group of school stakeholders to routinely review and clarify the school’s mission/purpose for student success.

(Indicators 1.1, 1.2)

Evidence and Rationale

The school’s current mission, which is to "create critically thinking problem solvers through rigorous educational experiences" clearly focuses on student success. A large sign at the school’s entrance confirmed this mission statement.

Evidence found indicated that this mission/purpose was not developed in concert with practices used by effective schools, as described in the rubric for this indicator. The principal’s overview and stakeholder interviews with teachers, parents, and students revealed some leaders and staff had met and developed the mission in 2014; however, a broad range of school stakeholders had not been included. There was no evidence to support the school’s use of a systematic, inclusive, or comprehensive process in the development of the school's mission statement. Also noted during stakeholder interviews was a lack of meaningful understanding and ability to articulate the intent of the mission statement. For instance, when stakeholders were asked to tell the school’s purpose/mission, they shared valuable insights and ideas, such as “to prepare me for life/be productive; to pursue a career path/college and career/military service; and to develop character.” However, when asked about the statement’s key concepts, they were at a loss.

An effective school has a clear focus that is described in its purpose/mission statement and must be evidenced in and aligned with all of its actions and improvement efforts. To be supported and sustained, this focus must be created through broad stakeholder input and clearly communicated in multiple ways to a variety of

audiences. The school's purpose/mission statement must serve as its anchor and strategic criterion against which all improvement in student learning and school effectiveness is measured.

Improvement Priority

Establish a formal continuous improvement process and train faculty and staff to ensure understanding and meaningful participation to include the following: implement a systematic collaborative process to revisit and clarify the school's purpose/mission; systematically review and use findings of existing improvement plans and documents; create a comprehensive system to assess a broad array of student performance data and school effectiveness results; establish strategic, measurable improvement goals; build effective ways to implement strategies and measure progress in meeting those goals; and report results in terms of progress made in attaining the improvement goals and informing the next phases of improvement planning.

(Indicators 1.3, 5.1, 5.4)

Evidence and Rationale

The school's evidence provided to the External Review Team included several existing improvement documents. These included the 2013-14 School Plan for Improving Student Support and Achievement, the 2014-15 Measurable Goals Identified for South Atlanta School of Law and Social Justice, the South Atlanta School of Law and Social Justice Profile for 2014-15, and the 2014-15 Title 1 School Wide School Improvement Plan.

Interviews with staff responsible for creating the school's Accreditation Self Assessment Report and with school stakeholders, especially teachers and parents, revealed minimal use of these existing documents to inform, frame, or guide school improvement activities. Interviews confirmed a lack of understanding by school staff regarding basic improvement process components, such as a rich, comprehensive set of valid student and school effectiveness data and rigorous data analysis (trend and comparability results) that are used to focus and create significant, measurable goals used to improve student performance and inform instructional strategies.

There was evidence from classroom observations and stakeholder interviews (all staff, students, parents) that many projects/initiatives to improve student learning and instructional practices are being implemented. Leaders and teachers are working hard, long hours on so many to help students. However, evidence also suggested little perceived linkage between some activities to a broader plan for improvement and the school's mission.

Critically important to building and sustaining a culture of improvement in any school is directly linking basic components such as why and what (data analysis and goals), how (strategies and implementation rigor), what happened (formative and summative evaluation, analysis of impact on student performance and school quality), and what happens next (analysis of results that guides the next cycle of planning for improvement).

Effective schools research clearly indicates that schools improve when leaders use systematic processes that meaningfully engage all school stakeholders and actively align planning with mission, action, and evaluation. Accreditation supports leaders to enact quality processes for continuous improvement that will provide clear

direction for improving conditions that support student learning.

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 school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	3.00	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	2.60	3.00
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	2.00	3.11
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	2.20	2.83
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	1.80	2.56

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.00	2.89
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	1.80	2.80

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop a process to coordinate and align the School Improvement Plan, Title I Plan, and Professional Development Plan.

(Indicators 4.6)

Evidence and Rationale

The school provided evidence of a variety of activities used to support this standard. Evidence provided, however, indicated a lack of continuity in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of processes which would result in a systemic series of actions that support the needs of students and their families.

In order to continue to build and sustain a culture of improvement, it is important to directly link the basic components of the different plans. Every plan should support the analysis of summative and formative assessments as well as the overall school goals. Effective schools’ research indicates that students improve when strategies for improvement are deliberate and consistent across all constructs.

Improvement Priority

Develop, implement, and communicate a plan that clearly articulates the expectations of the guidance and counseling department.

(Indicators 4.7)

Evidence and Rationale

Through interviews, it was clear that the students do not feel supported by the counseling department. The concerns expressed by students were further supported by parents during interviews. Concerns expressed included the advisement process regarding course selection and scheduling. The need to assist families in the college application and financial aid process exists in that services provided need to reach a greater number of students. The counseling department should be intentional in providing support to all students in the areas of course selection, scheduling, and college and career counseling. Additionally, the staff must endeavor to provide the emotional support services necessary for the well-being of students.

According to the American School Counselor Association, every student needs support, guidance, and opportunities in order to be prepared to become productive citizens. Students face unique and diverse challenges, both personally and developmentally, that impact academic achievement.

Opportunity for Improvement

Designate resources to increase technical hardware while providing a more reliable internet connection within the school's physical plant.

(Indicators 4.5)

Evidence and Rationale

Survey results, interview statements, and team observations provide evidence of less than adequate internet connectivity. A priority needs to be placed on improving access to both physical and reliable devices. The team noted the importance of providing professional development to teachers regarding the use of technology through instruction and student centered activities.

The use of technology can be a very positive and mind-expanding experience for students. The integration of technology at South Atlanta High School of Law and Social Justice would increase student engagement and challenge students.

Conclusion

Using the evidence collected, the External Review Team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. As the External Review Team reviewed artifacts and engaged in discussions/interviews with stakeholders, several overarching themes emerged.

~The small learning community and compassionate staff provide support to students.

~Students were actively engaged in the learning process.

~South Atlanta School of Law and Social Justice values stakeholders and makes a concerted effort to seek their input and engagement.

~ The school has experienced pockets of impressive academic success as evidenced in CCRPI and EOCT scores in Economics and US History. However, few specifics are available that explain 'why' and 'how' these improvements occurred; plus, a lack of information/understanding about these successes makes understanding and replication of processes difficult.

~There is a need to evaluate and improve the efficacy of instruction.

~There is a need to develop a formal process for continuous improvement.

~There is a need for a systematic process for evaluating and analyzing assessment data from a wide range of sources.

South Atlanta High School of Law and Social Justice (LSJ) is fortunate to be a small school in that it can effectively address the needs of each child. The staff, students, and parents are enthusiastic about the work being done at LSJ. There was a sense of passion among the staff. The school has a leadership team that is cohesive, supportive, and willing to do the necessary work for the purpose of providing opportunities for their students to be successful.

Formal, written procedures and processes, which could have served as road maps and anchors upon which to focus professional development and deeper understanding of teaching and learning are lacking. This lack of formal, written processes appears to have hindered implementation and evaluation of many academic programs and support services for students. Similar impact has been found in the quality of staff collaboration activities and data-driven decision making for improving curriculum and instruction.

The school is challenged by its community's demographics, especially evident in the degree of stakeholder engagement and collaboration, especially from parents and other community members. Recently undertaken initiatives that are bringing school staff into the community for purposeful dialogue hold great promise, in the face of these challenges. These kinds of proactive strategies can increase trust and open lines of

communication. Very importantly, they can become pathways for creating greater understanding and collaboration, all focused on defining the school's mission for improving student success.

In demonstrating a commitment to the principle tenets of Indicator 5.4, of particular concern is the need to develop a formal process for evaluating formative and summative assessment results. Although informal processes of collaboration and data analysis have the school moving in the right direction, formalizing the process with monitoring and oversight will strengthen the student learning and teacher growth. The school could use professional learning communities to address data analysis, instructional practices, and differentiated instruction.

While it was evident there are committed teachers working to engage students in learning, it was clear during classroom observations that there is a lack of consistency of expectations and rigor throughout the school. The development of a systemic plan for professional development not only provides opportunities to increase student achievement, but also provides means of monitoring the implementation of strategies in classrooms and planned opportunities for the evaluation of the results of professional learning.

The team found during their review that there are a number of opportunities for improvement for LSJ. Chief among those is the need to develop comprehensive and systemic expectations and processes. Evidence suggests that while there are pockets of good work being done, the school lacks a standard, school wide, approach to effective practices that would benefit the students. The advisory time is an opportunity for the school to develop multiple remedial opportunities for students during the school day. Those teachers that are comfortable with mastery grading should be encouraged to share their effective practice with others on the teaching staff. Teachers that have demonstrated effective use of Depth of Knowledge and Higher Order Thinking techniques in their classrooms should be given showcase opportunities in an effort to encourage other teachers to explore those techniques.

By immediately developing a process for quality continuous improvement, the school can create a concrete road map to use for reviewing/clarifying its purpose/mission statement, as referenced in the Improvement Priority found in this report. By testing its process in this context, the school will receive critical feedback (formative evaluation information), find where adjustments are needed, and better meet the needs of its own stakeholders. In addition, a broader group of stakeholders can gain practical experience, develop richer understanding, and demonstrate more personal buy-in for improving their school.

The staff of the school is eager to provide an outstanding educational experience for the students. An effective plan for teacher professional development that is focused on the priority needs of the school will prove to be an excellent resource as the school moves forward in the continuous improvement process.

Improvement Priorities

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

- Develop a plan to systematically and continuously use data analysis from a variety of sources to

develop, implement, and evaluate individualized learning support services to meet the needs of all students.

- Develop a process to coordinate and align the School Improvement Plan, Title I Plan, and Professional Development Plan.
- Develop and implement with fidelity a systematic, collaborative process that engages a broad group of school stakeholders to routinely review and clarify the school's mission/purpose for student success.
- Develop, implement, and communicate a plan that clearly articulates the expectations of the guidance and counseling department.
- Establish a formal continuous improvement process and train faculty and staff to ensure understanding and meaningful participation to include the following: implement a systematic collaborative process to revisit and clarify the school's purpose/mission; systematically review and use findings of existing improvement plans and documents; create a comprehensive system to assess a broad array of student performance data and school effectiveness results; establish strategic, measurable improvement goals; build effective ways to implement strategies and measure progress in meeting those goals; and report results in terms of progress made in attaining the improvement goals and informing the next phases of improvement planning.

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	223.59	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	219.05	274.14
Leadership Capacity	234.55	296.08
Resource Utilization	220.00	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

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Ms. Monika M Wiley	<p>Monika Wiley has a bachelors degree in mathematics education. She began her educational career at Bak Middle School of the Arts as a mathematics teacher in 1997. During this time she earned a Master's degree in mathematics education. After teaching for six years Ms. Wiley became an assistant principal at Jeaga Middle School in Palm Beach County, Florida. After serving in that capacity for three years, she relocated to Georgia serving as an assistant principal at Jonesboro High School for approximately three years. While serving as an assistant principal she earned her Education Specialist degree in Educational Leadership. In December 2009, she was appointed principal of North Clayton Middle School in Clayton County. In May 2012, Ms. Wiley was appointed the Director of Fine Arts/Magnet Schools for Clayton County Public Schools. She is currently a doctoral candidate in School Improvement. She has worked for AdvancED since 2007 as a team member for schools and systems and a lead evaluator for schools. She also serving as CCPS SACS Chair.</p>
Dr. Lucille W Hayden	<p>Advanc-ED Field Consultant for GA SACS CASI, 7 years; SACS CASI Regional-Associate Executive Director--8yrs; Metro Atlanta School District-Director of Curriculum+ Instruction Pre K--12, Director of Vocation Ed, Assistant Principal--8yrs; State Dept of Ed, Director of Standards Development, State Coordinator of Title 1 Evaluation--7yrs; Adjunct UG and G Professor--3yrs; Graduate Teaching+ Research Assistant--3yrs; classroom teacher and Teacher of Gifted--11yrs.</p>
Mr. James R Iddings	<p>Band Director (HS and MS) 1982-1998 Assistant Principal (MS) 1998-2001 Principal (HS and MS) 2002-2014 Executive Officer for High Schools (2014-Present)</p>

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Mrs. Catrina Renee Smith</p>	<p>Catrina has spent the past four years of her career as a literacy coach in the areas of ELA and social studies. She also has seventeen years of extensive experience in teaching English Language Arts. Catrina is currently teaching ninth grade literature and composition, Pre-AP ninth grade literature and composition, and tenth grade World literature and composition.</p> <p>Educational Experience:</p> <p>University of Georgia, AP Literature and Composition, Certification Columbus State University, Educational Specialist Degree, Leadership L-6 Certification University of West Alabama, MA Education, T-5 Certification Columbus State University, Secondary Education, English, T-4 Certification Tuskegee University, BA, English</p> <p>Professional Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Leadership Empowerment and School Transformation Conference: Presenter •Literacy Coach: Participated in leadership, team building, curriculum and instruction, assessments, disaggregating data, and providing professional development that supports best practices in standards-based and common core environments to help remove Kendrick High School from the priority list. •Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards (GAPSS) Team Member •Member of the Leadership Team •AP Language and Composition Coordinator •504 Coordinator •School Council Committee Instructional Education Program Coordinator •Early College High School Curriculum Committee <p>Professional Development Courses</p> <p>Thinking Maps Training Universal Collaborative Design (UDL) MAX Teaching Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) Training Teacher Leadership Academy Instructional Coaches Academy Common Core Georgia Performance Standards Curriculum 21 Summer Training School Improvement Grant (SIG) Fall Conference Smart Board Basics</p>
<p>Mrs. Pam Williams</p>	<p>Pam Williams has worked in education for 24 years. Over two decades were spent as a classroom teacher at the elementary, middle and high school levels. For the last three years, Pam has served as a teacher leader for instructional support at the high school level. Pam works in Appling County in southeast Georgia.</p> <p>In addition, Pam was honored to serve as the 2011 Georgia Teacher of the Year has had the pleasure of serving on Professional Standards Commission and Georgia AdvancEd State Board.</p> <p>On a personal note, Pam is happily married to Rodney and they have three young adult children and a "happily spoiled" toddler granddaughter.</p>

Next Steps

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

About AdvancED

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

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

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

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