



Accreditation Progress Report

Thomas County Schools

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Introduction

The Accreditation Progress Report provides this institution the opportunity to engage in a structured continuous improvement process to review, analyze, reflect, and report on progress it has made subsequent to the External Review. Additionally, the process facilitates ongoing professional learning, collaboration, and cooperation among the institution's staff and key stakeholders in identifying and articulating progress made in the areas most in need of improvement.

As such, this Accreditation Progress Report is the summary of this institution's focused improvement efforts, actions, and activities that demonstrate how it has addressed Improvement Priorities resulting from an AdvancED External Review. AdvancED uses the report to assess the progress this institution is making in improving its impact on teaching and learning, leadership capacity, and use of resources.

This Accreditation Progress Report includes the analysis and response by AdvancED to the institution's self-reported progress. Based on the findings in this report AdvancED re-assesses this institution's accreditation status. This determination is communicated through a formal letter from AdvancED and includes next steps, if appropriate, in the process.

About AdvancED

AdvancED® provides accreditation and school improvement services that are supported by state-of-the-art educational technologies, policy and advocacy outreach, education research and innovation to education providers of all types to create a world of opportunities for every learner. AdvancED works with over 32,000 institutions in more than 70 countries serving over 20 million students. AdvancED is the parent organization for the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI).

Progress Assessment

Improvement Priority 1

Statement:

Conduct a root cause analysis of student performance data and develop a professional learning plan that links data-based school and student needs to the system's overall Strategic Plan.

Description:

Interview data reveals that there is no clearly defined system-wide professional development that effectively links school improvement plans and professional development needs with the system's Strategic Plan. Moreover, relatively small decreases in achievement gaps among subgroups indicate more decisive action is needed to address these issues.

A professional development plan will serve the system and schools well in maintaining a focus on key professional development, designed to meet the needs of all staff and students, as it relates to the overall goal of improving teaching and learning through focused professional development.

Indicator 3.11

All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.

Institution Response

Progress Status:

Implemented

Response:

In the spring of 2015, the teaching and learning department continued work to update the system professional learning plan. As part of the comprehensive needs assessment conducted annually by the district, a root cause analysis was conducted to identify areas in need of support. As a result, professional learning topics were identified that aligned with Goal I Student Achievement (1.A) of the system strategic plan. Plans were developed to implement professional learning workshops that aligned with student performance deficiencies as noted in Goal I Student Achievement (1.B). Review of student achievement scores and diagnostic screeners

resulted in the following bulleted strategies for implementation to identify the gaps in student performance from low to high are enumerated below.

1. Analysis of student performance data to determine areas in need of additional support.
2. Solicitation of stakeholder input on school improvement initiatives.
3. Updated diagnostic screeners in grades K-8 for identifying both areas of weakness as well as strength.
4. Literacy strategies implemented in grades K-8 to support and strengthen reading and cross-curricular alignment.
5. Strengthened fluency in grades K-4 with the implementation of a vertically aligned differentiated toolkit to provide consistency and a vertically aligned curriculum in the teaching of phonics.
6. Implementation of blended learning at Bishop Hall Charter School in 2014 became the model for blended learning that was implemented at Thomas County Central High School with a focus on math achievement as noted in the Strategic Plan, Goal 1.A.
7. Purchased a vertically aligned elementary math curriculum for grades K-4 and provided professional learning as the curriculum was implemented.

At the elementary level, all three schools administer reading and math screeners three times a year for every student and analyze progress in both content areas. The classroom teacher reviews the data with both interventionists and administrators to create an academic plan of support for remediation or acceleration. School administration facilitates by participating in collaborative planning groups, grade level, and departmental teacher meetings to discuss strengths, weaknesses and progress in student performance data. The school leadership team monitors the school improvement plan and collaborates with the district curriculum department to plan for professional learning as needed.

At the middle school level (grades 5-8), data teams, composed of one chairperson and four members, analyze performance on formative and summative assessments to identify areas of strength and weakness. Performance data is also examined at the team level (which teams had which areas of strength and weakness). Classroom performance data is reviewed for all common (per grade level department) formative and summative assessments, as well as for benchmarks. This occurs during weekly grade level meetings, using the assessment software provided by the district. Teams analyze the data per teacher to determine standards of strength and weaknesses and then create a plan for remediating and accelerating learning where appropriate.

At the high school level, as soon as Milestone scores are released, a small group of administrators and teachers meet as a sub-committee of the school improvement committee. A comparison is made to the previous year's scores. Pacing guides are developed by comparing the scores and progress of classes in common subject areas. Teachers in common subjects with common planning are comparing data from common assessments and planning for adjusted instruction based on their observations. As part of the GOSA Scaling Blended learning grant, teachers are looking at test score data from 2016 Algebra and Geometry Milestones. The teachers have the list of specific students that need remediation in each strand. Beginning in FY17, administrators have been analyzing failure rates for 9th grade students and for special education students. Teachers who had a failure rate over 20% were asked to create a plan for improving their failure rates.

The system professional learning plan is developed and continually updated based on the collaboration of the district departments of curriculum and instruction, federal programs, special education, instructional technology, technology, and finance. The curriculum and instruction department works with the schools to support

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and monitor the implementation of current curriculum strategies, which include opportunities for vertical alignment and planning across grade levels, content areas, and other system departments. District leadership implements an updated professional learning calendar that begins in July of each year and runs through the following June. The professional learning plan connects the work related to System Strategic Plan Goal (IV.B) with trends noted in student performance data.

Attachments:

System Professional Learning Calendar 2016-2017
System Professional Learning Calendar Summer 2016
System Professional Learning Board Report-Vertical Alignment
System Professional Learning Plan 2017-2020
Thomas County Strategic Plan

Reviewer Response

Status:

Accept

Response:

After a review of the system's response and supporting documentation, AdvancED concurs that the Improvement Priority has been completed.

Diagnostic/Evaluation Criteria

Name	Statement or Question	Source of Evidence	Initial Performance Level	Updated Performance Level
Standards Diagnostic	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">District professional development plan involving the district and all schoolsThe system's response and supporting documentation.	2.17	3.00

Goals Summary

The following is a summary of the goals encompassed in this plan. The details for each goal are available in the next section.

#	Goal Name	Goal Details	Goal Type	Total Funding
1	Develop a system-wide professional learning plan that links data-based school and student needs to the system strategic plan.	Objectives: 3 Strategies: 3 Activities: 3	Organizational	\$15000

Goal 1: Develop a system-wide professional learning plan that links data-based school and student needs to the system strategic plan.

Measurable Objective 1:

collaborate to conduct a root cause analysis of student performance patterns by 08/31/2016 as measured by completion of root cause analysis.

Strategy 1:

Conduct root cause analysis - The district will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment (each spring) to identify areas that additional professional learning can support student achievement.

Research Cited: Alwin, L. (2002) The will and the way of data use.

Altschuld, J. W., & Witkin, B. R. (2000). From needs assessment to action: Transforming needs into solution strategies. Sage Publications.

Altschuld, J. and D. Kumar. (2009). Needs assessment: An overview. Sage Publications.

GLISI (2013). Leading a team to analyze root causes using quality tools. <http://glisi.org/resources/leading-team-analyze-root-causes-using-quality-tools-pbm/>

Gupta, K. (2007). A practical guide to needs assessment. Pfeiffer.

WestEd. (2008). A guide for comprehensive needs assessment.

Activity - Conduct needs assessment	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible

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Analyze student performance data to determine areas in need of additional support. Solicit stakeholder input on school improvement initiatives. Screeners and diagnostics are used to identify learning gaps for individual students. Data analysis prompts teachers to adjust instruction to meet unique learning needs for all students. This analysis also highlights areas in which teachers need additional strategies to provide instruction that addresses unique student learning gaps. Schools: All Schools	Parent Involvement, Professional Learning, Policy and Process	01/01/2016	08/31/2016	\$5000	Other	Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Director of Federal Programs, Building Administrator s, Curriculum Coordinators, Department Chairs, Grade Level Teacher Teams.
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Measurable Objective 2:

increase student growth by defining structures to support student learning by 05/31/2018 as measured by implementation of a data analysis and improvement cycle.

Strategy 1:

Define structures to support student learning. - School and system leaders will implement routines appropriate to their building to examine student performance data, universal screening measures, attendance and discipline data.

Research Cited: Alwin, L. (2002). The will and the way of data use. School Administrator, 59(11), 11.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. (2012). Shared purpose: the golden thread? London: CIPD.

Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S. (2008). An investigation of the impacts of teacher-driven professional development. Teacher Education Quarterly, 35(2), 134-154.

Datnow, A., Park, V., & Wohlstetter, P. (2007). Achieving with data: How high-performing school systems use data to improve instruction for elementary students. Los Angeles, CA: Center on Educational Governance, USC.

McIntire, T. (2002). The administrator's guide to data-driven decision making. Technology and Learning, 22(11), 18-33.

Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L. (2003). Examination of resource allocation in education: connecting spending to student performance. Austin, TX: SEDL.

Activity - Implement systematic data analysis protocol	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
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<p>Analyze student performance data to adjust instruction.</p> <p>Elementary: The interventionists at the three elementary schools gather the screener diagnostics three times a year for each student to analyze progress in both reading and math. The classroom teacher reviews the data with both the interventionists and administrators to create an academic plan of support for remediation or acceleration. School administration facilitates planning group, grade level, and departmental teacher meetings to discuss trends in student performance data. The school leadership team monitors the School Improvement Plan and collaborates with the district curriculum department to plan for professional learning as needed.</p> <p>Middle School: Thomas County Middle (5th-8th grade): Data teams, composed of one chairperson and four members, analyze performance on the formative and summative assessment, to identify areas of strength and weakness. Performance data was also examined at the team level (which teams had which areas of strength and weakness). Classroom performance data is reviewed for all common (per grade level department) formative and summative assessments, as well as for benchmarks. This is done during weekly grade level meetings, using the assessment software provided by the district. Teams analyze the data per teacher to determine standards of strength and weakness. They also determine common grade level weaknesses and create a plan for remediation of those skills. Each teacher provides remediation to students based on need.</p> <p>High School: As soon as Milestone scores are released, a small group of administrators and teachers meets as a sub-committee to the SIP committee. A comparison is made with the previous year's scores. There is also a comparison made between teachers in a common subject area. This is then used to develop the pacing guide for those subjects. Teachers in common subjects with common planning are comparing data from common assessments, and planning for adjusted instruction based on their observations. As part of the GOSA Scaling Blended learning grant, teachers are looking at test score data from 2016 Algebra and Geometry Milestones. The teachers have the list of specific students that need remediation in each strand. Beginning in FY17, administrators have been analyzing failure rates for 9th grade students and for special education students. Teachers who had a failure rate over 20% were asked to create a plan for improving their failure rates.</p> <p>Schools: All Schools</p>	<p>Direct Instruction, Professional Learning, Academic Support Program, Behavioral Support Program</p>	<p>01/01/2017</p>	<p>05/31/2018</p>	<p>\$10000</p>	<p>State Funds</p>	<p>Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Elementary and Secondary Curriculum Coordinators, Building administrators, Department chairs, Teachers</p>
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Measurable Objective 3:

collaborate to develop the system professional learning plan to include opportunities for vertical alignment and planning across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions by 05/31/2017 as measured by formulation and implementation of the system professional learning plan.

Strategy 1:

Use needs assessment to formulate professional learning plan - District curriculum staff work with the buildings to develop the professional learning plan that will provide support to areas of weakness identified in the needs assessment and data analysis cycle. Data sources will include universal screener data, state assessments,

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teacher surveys and observations, student attendance and discipline data.

Research Cited: Altschuld, J. W., & Witkin, B. R. (2000). From needs assessment to action: Transforming needs into solution strategies. Sage Publications.

Altschuld, J. and D. Kumar. (2009). Needs assessment: An overview. Sage Publications.

GLISI (2013). Leading a team to analyze root causes using quality tools. <http://glisi.org/resources/leading-team-analyze-root-causes-using-quality-tools-pbm/>

Gupta, K. (2007). A practical guide to needs assessment. Pfeiffer.

WestEd. (2008). A guide for comprehensive needs assessment.

Activity - Professional learning plan	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
System curriculum department works with grade level and content teachers to analyze data and determine areas that indicate the need for professional learning. Topics are added to the system professional learning plan throughout the school year and during the summer. Identified staff participate in professional learning sessions according to their role. Schools: All Schools	Professional Learning	07/01/2016	05/31/2018	\$0	Title II Part A	Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Elementary and Secondary Curriculum Coordinators, Director of Federal Programs, Building Administrator s, Department Chairpersons, Grade Level and Content Teachers.

Improvement Priority 2

Statement:

Develop and implement a comprehensive process for collaborative learning communities to include opportunities for vertical alignment and planning across grade levels, content areas and other system divisions

Description:

Little evidence was presented to show that all system staff participate in collaborative learning environments across grade levels, content areas and other system divisions.

Vertical alignment is regarded as a best practice in improving student performance in schools. It ensures what is being taught and tested in the classrooms aligns with the state standards and assessments. It articulates the logical, consistent order for teaching the standards-based content at each grade or course level, which allows teachers to focus on building skills and knowledge while reducing the need for excess review and repetition. Teaching is purposefully structured and logically sequenced so that students are acquiring the knowledge and developing skills that will prepare them for more challenging, higher-level work.

Indicator 3.5

The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.

Indicator 3.12

The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.

Institution Response

Progress Status:

Implemented

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Response:

The system professional learning plan is developed and continuously updated based on the collaboration of the district departments of curriculum and instruction, federal programs, special education, instructional technology, technology, and finance. The curriculum and instruction department works with the schools to support and monitor the implementation of current curriculum strategies, which includes opportunities for vertical alignment and planning across grade levels, content areas, and other system departments. District leadership implements an updated professional learning calendar that begins in July of each year and runs through the following June. The professional learning plan connects the work related to System Strategic Plan Goal (IV.B) with trends noted in student performance data.

In 2015, an elementary curriculum coordinator and a secondary curriculum coordinator were hired to work directly with the alignment of curriculum for both the elementary grades as well as the middle and secondary grades. District curriculum staff work with the buildings to develop the professional learning plan that provides support to areas of weakness identified in the needs assessment and data analysis cycle. Data sources include universal screeners, state assessments, teacher surveys and observations, student attendance and discipline data.

The system curriculum and instruction, special education, federal programs, and digital learning departments, along with school leadership teams, building administrators, department chairs and grade level and content teachers, analyze achievement and usage data to determine areas that indicate the need for system professional learning needs. A needs assessment survey is also administered annually to gather input regarding the needs of teachers and leaders. Throughout the school year and during the summer, professional learning topics are added to the calendar as new data and additional input become available.

Attachments:

System Professional Learning Calendar 2016-2017
System Professional Learning Calendar Summer 2016
System Professional Learning Board Report-Vertical Alignment
System Professional Learning Plan 2017-2020
Thomas County Strategic Plan

Reviewer Response

Status:

Accept

Response:

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Based upon a review of the system's response and supporting documentation such as the Professional Learning Calendar for 2016-2017 and the system Strategic Plan, AdvanceED concurs that the Improvement Priority has been completed.

Diagnostic/Evaluation Criteria

Name	Statement or Question	Source of Evidence	Initial Performance Level	Updated Performance Level
Standards Diagnostic	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The system's response and supporting documentation.	2.67	3.00
Standards Diagnostic	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The system's response and supporting documentation.	2.67	3.00

Goals Summary

The following is a summary of the goals encompassed in this plan. The details for each goal are available in the next section.

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Goal 1: Develop a system-wide professional learning plan that links data-based school and student needs to the system strategic plan.

Measurable Objective 1:

collaborate to conduct a root cause analysis of student performance patterns by 08/31/2016 as measured by completion of root cause analysis.

Strategy 1:

Conduct root cause analysis - The district will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment (each spring) to identify areas that additional professional learning can support student achievement.

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Altschuld, J. W., & Witkin, B. R. (2000). From needs assessment to action: Transforming needs into solution strategies. Sage Publications.

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Gupta, K. (2007). A practical guide to needs assessment. Pfeiffer.

WestEd. (2008). A guide for comprehensive needs assessment.

Activity - Conduct needs assessment	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible

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Analyze student performance data to determine areas in need of additional support. Solicit stakeholder input on school improvement initiatives. Screeners are diagnostic and used to identify learning gaps for individual students. Data analysis prompts teachers to adjust instruction to meet unique learning needs for all students. This analysis also highlights areas in which teachers need additional strategies to provide instruction that addresses unique student learning gaps.	Parent Involvement, Professional Learning, Policy and Process	01/01/2016	08/31/2016	\$5000	Other	Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Director of Federal Programs, Building Administrator s, Curriculum Coordinators, Department Chairs, Grade Level Teacher Teams.
Schools: All Schools						

Measurable Objective 2:

increase student growth by defining structures to support student learning by 05/31/2018 as measured by implementation of a data analysis and improvement cycle.

Strategy 1:

Define structures to support student learning. - School and system leaders will implement routines appropriate to their building to examine student performance data, universal screening measures, attendance and discipline data.

Research Cited: Alwin, L. (2002). The will and the way of data use. School Administrator, 59(11), 11.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. (2012). Shared purpose: the golden thread? London: CIPD.

Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S. (2008). An investigation of the impacts of teacher-driven professional development. Teacher Education Quarterly, 35(2), 134-154.

Datnow, A., Park, V., & Wohlstetter, P. (2007). Achieving with data: How high-performing school systems use data to improve instruction for elementary students. Los Angeles, CA: Center on Educational Governance, USC.

McIntire, T. (2002). The administrator's guide to data-driven decision making. Technology and Learning, 22(11), 18-33.

Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L. (2003). Examination of resource allocation in education: connecting spending to student performance. Austin, TX: SEDL.

Activity - Implement systematic data analysis protocol	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
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<p>Analyze student performance data to adjust instruction.</p> <p>Elementary: The interventionists at the three elementary schools gather the screener diagnostics three times a year for each student to analyze progress in both reading and math. The classroom teacher reviews the data with both the interventionists and administrators to create an academic plan of support for remediation or acceleration. School administration facilitates planning group, grade level, and departmental teacher meetings to discuss trends in student performance data. The school leadership team monitors the School Improvement Plan and collaborates with the district curriculum department to plan for professional learning as needed.</p> <p>Middle School: Thomas County Middle (5th-8th grade): Data teams, composed of one chairperson and four members, analyze performance on the formative and summative assessment, to identify areas of strength and weakness. Performance data was also examined at the team level (which teams had which areas of strength and weakness). Classroom performance data is reviewed for all common (per grade level department) formative and summative assessments, as well as for benchmarks. This is done during weekly grade level meetings, using the assessment software provided by the district. Teams analyze the data per teacher to determine standards of strength and weakness. They also determine common grade level weaknesses and create a plan for remediation of those skills. Each teacher provides remediation to students based on need.</p> <p>High School: As soon as Milestone scores are released, a small group of administrators and teachers meets as a sub-committee to the SIP committee. A comparison is made with the previous year's scores. There is also a comparison made between teachers in a common subject area. This is then used to develop the pacing guide for those subjects. Teachers in common subjects with common planning are comparing data from common assessments, and planning for adjusted instruction based on their observations. As part of the GOSA Scaling Blended learning grant, teachers are looking at test score data from 2016 Algebra and Geometry Milestones. The teachers have the list of specific students that need remediation in each strand. Beginning in FY17, administrators have been analyzing failure rates for 9th grade students and for special education students. Teachers that had a failure rate over 20% were asked to create a plan for improving their failure rates.</p> <p>Schools: All Schools</p>	<p>Direct Instruction, Professional Learning, Academic Support Program, Behavioral Support Program</p>	<p>01/01/2017</p>	<p>05/31/2018</p>	<p>\$10000</p>	<p>State Funds</p>	<p>Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Elementary and Secondary Curriculum Coordinators, Building administrators, Department chairs, Teachers</p>
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Measurable Objective 3:

collaborate to develop the system professional learning plan to include opportunities for vertical alignment and planning across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions. by 05/31/2017 as measured by Formulation and implementation of the system professional learning plan.

Strategy 1:

use needs assessment to formulate professional learning plan - District curriculum staff work with the buildings to develop the professional learning plan that will provide support to areas of weakness identified in the needs assessment and data analysis cycle. Data sources will include universal screener data, state assessments,

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teacher surveys and observations, student attendance and discipline data.

Research Cited: Altschuld, J. W., & Witkin, B. R. (2000). From needs assessment to action: Transforming needs into solution strategies. Sage Publications.

Altschuld, J. and D. Kumar. (2009). Needs assessment: An overview. Sage Publications.

GLISI (2013). Leading a team to analyze root causes using quality tools. <http://glisi.org/resources/leading-team-analyze-root-causes-using-quality-tools-pbm/>

Gupta, K. (2007). A practical guide to needs assessment. Pfeiffer.

WestEd. (2008). A guide for comprehensive needs assessment.

Activity - Professional learning plan	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
System curriculum department works with grade level and content teachers to analyze data and determine areas that indicate the need for professional learning. Topics are added to the system professional learning plan throughout the school year and during the summer. Identified staff participate in professional learning sessions according to their role. Schools: All Schools	Professional Learning	07/01/2016	05/31/2018	\$0	Title II Part A	Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Elementary and Secondary Curriculum Coordinators, Director of Federal Programs, Building Administrator s, Department Chairpersons, Grade Level and Content Teachers.

Improvement Priority 3

Statement:

Develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive mentoring, coaching, and induction program for teachers.

Description:

Evidence was presented to show that new teachers are given a form of induction training at the beginning of the school year and reports state that mentor teachers are assigned. A formalized, written plan that includes performance measures has not been identified. The team found little to no evidence to show that there is a prescribed plan for mentoring or coaching teachers who need support.

Retention of highly qualified teachers depends partly on the amount of support they receive during the induction process or in times they may need support. Research shows that mentoring programs not only contribute to their retention in the field but also to their overall effectiveness as a teacher.

Indicator 3.7

Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Institution Response

Progress Status:

Implemented

Response:

Beginning in the spring of 2016, system leadership worked to design a new teacher induction and mentoring program for beginning teachers and for teachers new to the district.

At each school, school-level leadership identified a building-level mentor coordinator. Each building's mentor coordinator was given a \$1200.00 supplement and worked with the New Teacher Induction Coordinator at the district level to develop a system- and building-level infrastructure of support for new teachers. For

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support, each building's mentor coordinator held monthly meetings at the building level and worked through the monthly topics as outlined in the New Teacher Induction Handbook. The building-level mentor coordinators also worked with the individual mentors assigned to each new teacher at the building level.

A New Teacher Handbook was created in the spring of 2016. This handbook features activities that are planned at the system and school levels to provide new teachers with support. The handbook includes descriptors to be used by the mentor coordinator at each school to guide the monthly meetings with the new teachers in that building.

System-level staff hosts quarterly professional learning workshops with new and induction phase teachers. Topics included: 1) Classroom Management and Professionalism; 2) Curriculum, Planning and Instruction; 3) Transforming Teaching with Technology; and 4) Motivation and Rapport and a Teacher's Influence. These workshops are structured to allow new teachers the opportunity to choose one of the four sessions to attend each quarter. These sessions are aligned with 101 Answers for New Teachers and Their Mentors, a book which all new teachers receive. The goal is for each new teacher to have completed all four professional learning sessions by the end of the school year. After each professional learning session, the new teachers are surveyed for their feedback to improve the session.

Attachments:

New Teacher survey Fall 2016
New Teacher Induction Sign In Sheets
New Teacher Induction Handbook
New Teacher Induction Board Report 2017
Thomas County Strategic Plan
New Teacher Induction Learning Agendas
Lead Coordinators meeting sample
New Teacher Survey Nov. 2016

Reviewer Response

Status:

Accept

Response:

AdvancED agrees that the Improvement Priority has been completed.

Diagnostic/Evaluation Criteria

Name	Statement or Question	Source of Evidence	Initial Performance Level	Updated Performance Level
Standards Diagnostic	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The system's response and supporting documentation. 	2.00	3.00

Goals Summary

The following is a summary of the goals encompassed in this plan. The details for each goal are available in the next section.

#	Goal Name	Goal Details	Goal Type	Total Funding
1	Implement a comprehensive mentoring, coaching, and induction program for teachers.	Objectives: 1 Strategies: 1 Activities: 3	Organizational	\$21000

Goal 1: Implement a comprehensive mentoring, coaching, and induction program for teachers.

Measurable Objective 1:

collaborate to implement a comprehensive mentoring, coaching, and induction program for teachers by 05/31/2017 as measured by participation of teachers new to the district and / or new to the teaching profession.

Strategy 1:

Develop the induction program. - System leaders will develop a professional learning program to support teachers new to the district or new to the profession.
Research Cited: Colbert, Brown, Choi, & Thomas, (2008) Investigation of the impacts of teacher-driven professional development

Activity - Implement the mentoring program	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
Host quarterly professional learning workshops with new and induction phase teachers. Topics will include 1) Classroom management and professionalism; 2)Curriculum, planning and instruction; 3)Transforming Teaching with Technology; and 4)Motivation and Rapport and a Teacher's influence. Throughout the school year, all new teachers have the opportunity to choose one of the four sessions while also reading the book "101 Answers for New Teachers and Their Mentors". The goal is for each teacher to have completed all four professional learning sessions by the end of the school year. After each professional learning session, the new teachers were surveyed for their feedback to improve the session. Schools: All Schools	Professional Learning	07/25/2016	05/31/2017	\$10000	Title II Part A	Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, System Induction Coordinator, Director of Federal Programs.
Activity - Designate and train mentor coordinators	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible
designate building mentor coordinators. Meet quarterly to provide professional learning, evaluate participant needs, and plan further support. Schools: All Schools	Professional Learning	07/25/2016	05/31/2017	\$10000	Title II Part A	Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, System Induction Coordinator, Director of Federal Programs.
Activity - Create a New Teacher Induction Handbook	Activity Type	Begin Date	End Date	Resource Assigned	Source Of Funding	Staff Responsible

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A New Teacher Handbook was created with monthly descriptors to be used by the mentor coordinator at each school for guiding the monthly meetings with new teachers within each building. Schools: All Schools	Professional Learning	07/01/2016	05/31/2017	\$1000	Title II Part A	Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, System Induction Coordinator, Director of Federal Programs.
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Report of the External Review Team for Thomas County Schools

200 N. Pinetree Blvd
Thomasville
GA 31792
US

Dr. George Kornegay Jr.
Superintendent

Date: February 22, 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

Prior to arriving for the on-site review, the Team began its work with a conference call to ensure that each member was aware of and in-sync with all of the requirements for participating in and conducting the External Review. The Lead Evaluator explained the composition of the work space with particular attention being given to the artifacts and other documents placed there to facilitate the review. The Team reviewed the schedule and Team member assignments to make sure that all were well-prepared for the specific work they were to perform. Team members were asked to study the system and school Accreditation Reports with specific attention being given to their Standard assignment.

During the on-site phase of the review, the Team met with central office personnel, school board members, school level administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents and community members. There are seven schools in the system, one primary, two elementary, one middle, one high school, one charter and one alternative school. The Team visited five of the seven schools and interviewed the leadership team, spoke informally with randomly selected students and conducted classroom observations.

The External Review Team extends its heartfelt thanks to Thomas County Schools for being well-prepared for the review. The system administered all of the AdvancED surveys and completed reports as required during

the self-assessment process. The central office was well-prepared for the External Review. All aspects of the process including the schedule and related logistics were thoughtfully planned and well executed. Travel arrangements, housing, and hospitality were excellent which made the Team comfortable and able to work effectively. All required documentation/evidence of the Internal Review were available for review in hard-copy format or electronically via a portal specifically set up for the review. The Team is most appreciative for the manner in which stakeholders responded to questions and requests for additional information; in doing so, the system demonstrated its commitment to transparency and the accreditation 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
Superintendents	1
Board Members	6
Administrators	23
Instructional Staff	47
Support Staff	18
Students	90
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	36
Total	221

Results

Teaching and Learning Impact

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	3.00	2.69
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	3.00	2.55
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	3.00	2.54
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.50	2.70
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	2.67	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.83	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.00	2.67

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	2.83	2.97
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	2.00	2.46
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	2.83	2.57
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.17	2.60
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	2.67	2.63

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	2.50	2.67
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	2.83	2.48
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	2.00	2.14
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	2.50	2.45
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	2.50	2.85

Student Performance Diagnostic

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

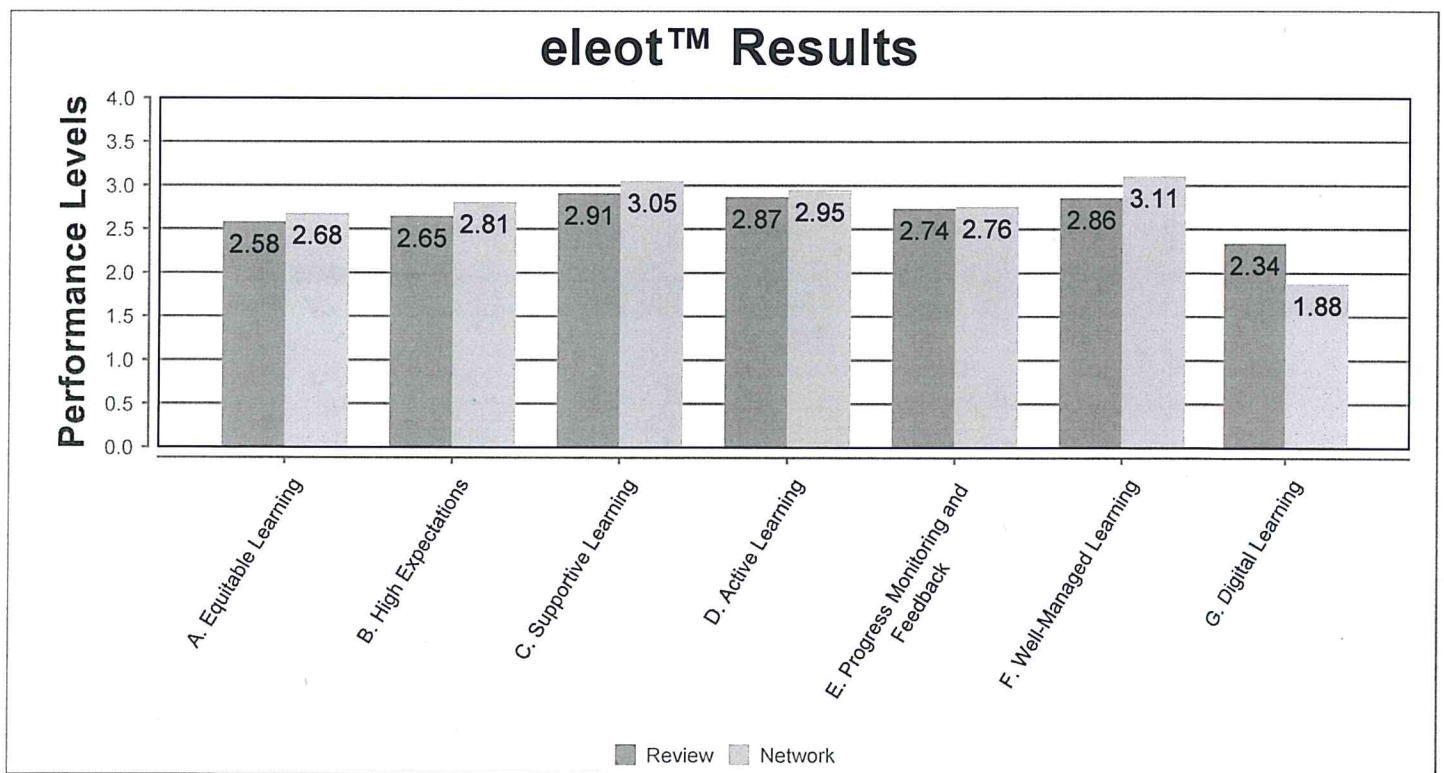
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	3.00	3.32
Test Administration	3.00	3.62
Equity of Learning	2.00	2.52
Quality of Learning	3.00	3.06

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

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



The External Review Team visited five schools and conducted observations in 60 classrooms. Based on those observations, the Supportive Learning Environment received the highest rating of 2.91 which ranks .14 of a point below the AdvancED Network (AEN) average of 3.05. The next highest rated environment was the Active Learning Environment with a rating of 2.87 which ranks .08 of a point below the AEN average of 2.95. Following closely behind was the Well-Managed Learning Environment with a rating of 2.86 which ranks .25 of

a point below the AEN average of 3.11. Progress Monitoring received a rating of 2.75 which ranks right at the AEN average of 2.76. The High Expectations Environment with a rating of 2.65 ranks .16 of a point below the AEN average of 2.81 while the Equitable Learning Environment received a rating of 2.58 ranking .10 of a point below the AEN average. The Digital Learning Environment received a rating of 2.34 which exceeds the AEN average of 1.88 by .46 of a point.

Of particular note is the Digital Learning Environment where the Team noted a high percentage of students in classrooms being engaged with digital devices. The system has a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) policy which allows students to use their digital devices to engage in learning activities. All classrooms in the system are equipped with interactive white boards, a teacher workstation and several desktop computers for student use. Each student at the Bishop Hall Charter School is equipped with a Chrome Book for use at school and at home. Having these technology resources is an example of the system's commitment to providing resources needed in a 21st Century learning environment.

The overall tenor of the classroom environments can be described as being well-managed, supportive, active, and equipped with an above average amount of digital learning devices. While examining the Equitable Learning Environment the Team noted a lack of ample opportunities for students to learn about their own and others backgrounds, cultures, or differences. While observing the High Expectations Environment most notably was little to no students being exposed to high quality exemplars during instruction.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.60	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	20.00%	38.33%	23.33%	18.33%
2.	3.35	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	43.33%	48.33%	8.33%	0.00%
3.	2.57	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	11.67%	51.67%	18.33%	18.33%
4.	1.78	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	5.00%	21.67%	20.00%	53.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.58						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.05	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	18.33%	68.33%	13.33%	0.00%
2.	3.13	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	23.33%	66.67%	10.00%	0.00%
3.	1.53	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	5.00%	16.67%	5.00%	73.33%
4.	2.92	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	13.33%	66.67%	18.33%	1.67%
5.	2.63	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	15.00%	46.67%	25.00%	13.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.65						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.93	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	18.33%	58.33%	21.67%	1.67%
2.	3.07	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	25.00%	58.33%	15.00%	1.67%
3.	2.90	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	16.67%	61.67%	16.67%	5.00%
4.	3.08	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	23.33%	61.67%	15.00%	0.00%
5.	2.55	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	16.67%	41.67%	21.67%	20.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.91						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.07	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	25.00%	58.33%	15.00%	1.67%
2.	2.43	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	16.67%	36.67%	20.00%	26.67%
3.	3.12	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	30.00%	51.67%	18.33%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.87						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.75	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	21.67%	43.33%	23.33%	11.67%
2.	2.72	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	13.33%	55.00%	21.67%	10.00%
3.	2.87	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	15.00%	58.33%	25.00%	1.67%
4.	2.70	Understands how her/his work is assessed	11.67%	60.00%	15.00%	13.33%
5.	2.68	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	11.67%	56.67%	20.00%	11.67%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.74						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.22	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	31.67%	58.33%	10.00%	0.00%
2.	3.10	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	25.00%	60.00%	15.00%	0.00%
3.	2.57	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	25.00%	31.67%	18.33%	25.00%
4.	2.38	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	21.67%	30.00%	13.33%	35.00%
5.	3.05	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	23.33%	60.00%	15.00%	1.67%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.86						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.60	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	36.67%	23.33%	3.33%	36.67%
2.	2.50	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	35.00%	21.67%	1.67%	41.67%
3.	1.92	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	15.00%	18.33%	10.00%	56.67%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.34						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Conduct a root cause analysis of student performance data and develop a professional learning plan that links data-based school and student needs to the system’s overall Strategic Plan.

(Indicator 3.11)

Evidence and Rationale

Interview data reveals that there is no clearly defined system-wide professional development that effectively links school improvement plans and professional development needs with the system’s Strategic Plan.

Moreover, relatively small decreases in achievement gaps among subgroups indicate more decisive action is needed to address these issues.

A professional development plan will serve the system and schools well in maintaining a focus on key professional development, designed to meet the needs of all staff and students, as it relates to the overall goal of improving teaching and learning through focused professional development.

Improvement Priority

Develop and implement a comprehensive process for collaborative learning communities to include opportunities for vertical alignment and planning across grade levels, content areas and other system divisions

(Indicator 3.5, Indicator 3.12)

Evidence and Rationale

Little evidence was presented to show that all system staff participate in collaborative learning environments across grade levels, content areas and other system divisions.

Vertical alignment is regarded as a best practice in improving student performance in schools. It ensures what is being taught and tested in the classrooms aligns with the state standards and assessments. It articulates the logical, consistent order for teaching the standards-based content at each grade or course level, which allows teachers to focus on building skills and knowledge while reducing the need for excess review and repetition. Teaching is purposefully structured and logically sequenced so that students are acquiring the knowledge and developing skills that will prepare them for more challenging, higher-level work.

Improvement Priority

Develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive mentoring, coaching, and induction program for teachers. (Indicator 3.7)

Evidence and Rationale

Evidence was presented to show that new teachers are given a form of induction training at the beginning of the school year and reports state that mentor teachers are assigned. A formalized, written plan that includes performance measures has not been identified. The team found little to no evidence to show that there is a prescribed plan for mentoring or coaching teachers who need support.

Retention of highly qualified teachers depends partly on the amount of support they receive during the induction process or in times they may need support. Research shows that mentoring programs not only contribute to their retention in the field but also to their overall effectiveness as a teacher.

Opportunity For Improvement

Conduct an analysis of district-wide communication procedures and processes and develop a formal district communication plan for all stakeholder use, and provide avenues for meaningful two-way communications. (Indicator 3.8, Indicator 5.5)

Evidence and Rationale

The system identified the need for improved communication in the Accreditation Report. Interviews revealed that a formal communication plan is not in place. School level interviews indicated that communication is a "phone call away." The nature of easy availability should not trump the need for an established, formal communication plan.

A formal communication plan will detail appropriate methods of communication, depending on intent, as well as streamline lines of communication between the system and stakeholders. Such a plan will help Thomas County Schools outline, and adhere to, a designated method of disseminating information to its stakeholders; furthermore, a formal communication plan will maintain transparency between the school system and stakeholders as well as build trust, which is a key component to an effective school-community partnership.

Opportunity For Improvement

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

(Indicator 3.9)

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with central office and school based administrators revealed that the high school has advocacy structures in place for students. There was little to no evidence that the middle and elementary schools have advocacy structures in place nor was there evidence of annual evaluation of those structures at the high school.

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

Powerful Practice

The system provides curriculum and extended learning experiences for students with opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills.

(Indicator 3.1, Indicator 4.2, Indicator 4.8)

Evidence and Rationale

Instructional time and fiscal resources focus on supporting the purpose and direction of the system through its schools' educational and exploratory offerings. A variety of pathway options are available to meet the needs of students including those of Career, Technical, Agriculture, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, and Advanced Academic areas.

The presence and availability of a variety of course offerings help ensure that students have ample opportunities and options for being college and/or career ready upon high school graduation.

Leadership Capacity

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress towards its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its institutional purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to enact strategies to improve results of student learning.

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

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

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

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

Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	2.83	2.67
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	3.00	2.69
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	3.00	2.87
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.00	2.64

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	2.83	2.96
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.00	2.99
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	3.33	3.20
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	2.67	3.00
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	3.00	2.69

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	2.83	2.78

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

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

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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	3.67	3.43
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.67	3.12

Findings

Powerful Practice

The system-level leadership of Thomas County Schools routinely affords autonomy to its school-level leadership to carry out day-to-day and long-term duties and responsibilities that are focused on addressing each school's identified areas of sustainment and improvement.

(Indicator 2.1, Indicator 2.2, Indicator 2.3)

Evidence and Rationale

There was a large citation of evidence found within the Accreditation Reports, survey results, and interviews to suggest that the system leadership provides a high level of autonomy to school leadership teams. System leaders' interviews acknowledged the lack of interference between the board and school operations.

Additionally, school leaders' interviews confirmed the absence of Board influence in the operation of school.

Autonomy empowers school leaders to take ownership of their schools' successes. Moreover, the power to lead without interference deters additional encumbrances which otherwise can affect the working environment and school effectiveness. Additionally, autonomy helps to develop a level of trust between the system and schools that fosters a culture centered on effective and concentrated leadership practices aimed at school

improvement. Trust is a proven indicator to promoting teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1986), which has been supported by research as a key influence on student success.

Resource Utilization

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

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

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

Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	3.00	2.98
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	3.00	2.98
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.00	3.05
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	3.00	2.67

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	2.83	2.82
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.67	2.64
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.50	2.65
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	2.67	2.64

Findings

Powerful Practice

Hand-In-Hand Primary School provides exemplary human and physical resources by supporting instructional services, communicating a purpose and direction and establishing a sense of community while developing relationships among young children and adults.

(Indicator 4.3)

Evidence and Rationale

Through a review of documentation included in the Early Learning Self Assessment, interviews with various stakeholders, observation of instruction and interactions, it is evident members are committed to utilizing developmentally appropriate strategies for all groups of students and embracing the families of the children they serve. The success of these efforts was confirmed through survey data as well as stakeholder interviews. Parents feel that Hand-In-Hand provides a safe supportive learning environment for their children. They appreciate the fact that many of the staff members know their children by name and trust them with their safety. Parents were most appreciative for the many community partnerships such as, Babies Can't Wait, reverse inclusion program and parent involvement opportunities.

Research demonstrates that high quality early learning increases a child's chances of succeeding in school and in life. Children who attend high-quality programs are less likely to be retained, less likely to need special education and more likely to graduate from high school. They also have higher earnings as adults and are less likely to become dependent on governmental assistance or involved in criminal activity.

Powerful Practice

The Thomas County School System maintains school campuses that are safe and secure, clean, and have overall positive climates.

(Indicator 4.3)

Evidence and Rationale

Evidence including survey data, interviews with parents, and on-site visits clearly show that Thomas County Schools are places where students can learn in a safe, clean, and healthy environment. Custodial staff, the school nutrition team, school resource officers, school nurses, and all members of the faculty, staff and administration help to ensure these outstanding facilities.

Having facilities that are safe and well cared for are important for the overall school culture. When students, parents, and teachers are proud of their school, it shows in student behavior, parent satisfaction, and teacher morale and effectiveness.

Powerful Practice

The system demonstrates a commitment to increase the use of instructional technology by providing a wide range of computer-based learning opportunities and equipment throughout the schools.

(Indicator 4.6)

Evidence and Rationale

Every classroom in the system is equipped with an interactive whiteboard which is used by both teacher and students. Students at all campuses have access to computers, to include many computer labs throughout the school system. Many classrooms utilize digital technologies during the teaching and learning process to conduct research and to gather and use information for learning as evidenced by above average ratings in the digital learning environment. Additionally, the Bishop Hall Charter School provides each of its students with a Chrome Book for use at school and at home.

Technology is an important skill for the 21st-Century learner and will be vital for any student as they think about entering college or the workforce. Data has also shown that when actively using technology for research, solving problems, collaboration, and other learning activities, students are more engaged and motivated learners.

Powerful Practice

The system provides curriculum and extended learning experiences for students with opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills.

(Indicator 3.1, Indicator 4.2, Indicator 4.8)

Evidence and Rationale

Instructional time and fiscal resources focus on supporting the purpose and direction of the system through its schools' educational and exploratory offerings. A variety of pathway options are available to meet the needs of students including those of Career, Technical, Agriculture, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, and Advanced Academic areas.

The presence and availability of a variety of course offerings help ensure that students have ample opportunities and options for being college and/or career ready upon high school graduation.

Conclusion

Interviewees spoke highly of the expansion of the Advanced Placement course offerings, improved graduation rates, its expanded foreign language program and dual enrollment opportunities which could lead to students receiving an Associate's Degree while in high school. The Team noted robust course offerings in the Career Technical and Agriculture Education (CTAE) program which can lead to industry certification in certain programs.

Interviews with stakeholder groups revealed outstanding support for the governance and leadership of the system. The groups felt very strongly and positively about the leadership provided by the Superintendent of Schools. Many individuals attested to his open-door policy, transparency and actions taken on issues and/or concerns brought to his attention. They feel that the system's team of leaders is very supportive, resourceful and makes decisions that are in the best interest of its primary clientele, students.

Two of the major challenges of the system is that of closing the achievement gap between African American and white students, and between students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and those that are not. While no specific interventions and/or activities were noted by the Team, the system recognizes the need to address student achievement for these sub-groups.

The implementation and expansion of professional learning to include Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with a major focus on individual student performance and the use of the data in the vertical alignment and planning processes across all content areas and system divisions should be addressed.

The system's teacher induction program appears to lack a comprehensive approach to mentoring and coaching teachers as well as comprehensively evaluating the program to ensure that it effectively assists teachers identified as needing to improve their instructional effectiveness.

A strategic emphasis on addressing these challenges with a focus on individual and overall student achievement is critical to improved student achievement in the core academic areas in the system. The human, physical, and intellectual resources are present in the system to effectively address these challenges. Using the Improvement Priorities and Opportunities for Improvement outlined by the Team can serve as a guide in the direction of more effective continuous improvement throughout the system.

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:

- Conduct a root cause analysis of student performance data and develop a professional learning plan that links data-based school and student needs to the system's overall Strategic Plan.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive process for collaborative learning communities to include opportunities for vertical alignment and planning across grade levels, content areas and other system

divisions

- Develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive mentoring, coaching, and induction program for teachers.

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	278.86	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	261.11	274.14
Leadership Capacity	306.94	296.08
Resource Utilization	283.33	286.32

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

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

Addenda

Individual Institution Results (Self-reported)

Institution Name	Teaching and Learning Impact	Leadership Capacity	Resource Utilization	Overall IEQ Score
Bishop Hall Charter School	300.00	327.27	328.57	312.82
Cross Creek Elementary School	300.00	345.45	285.71	310.26
Garrison-Pilcher Elementary School	295.24	309.09	300.00	300.00
Renaissance Center for Academic and Career Development	295.24	300.00	271.43	292.31
Thomas County Central High School	295.24	309.09	328.57	305.13
Thomas County Middle School	290.48	318.18	271.43	294.87

Other System Institutions

The following institutions did not utilize ASSIST to complete the Accreditation Report for this External Review. Therefore self-reported results are not included as part of this report. Some institutions appearing below may have been required to submit the Accreditation Report outside of ASSIST.

Institution	Institution
Hand-in-Hand Primary School	

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Dr. James W Brown</p>	<p>Dr. James W. Brown is a graduate of Florida A and M University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education and a Master of Education in Guidance Services. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Florida State University in the area of Educational Management Systems. He has held employment as a music teacher/band director in Nassau and Gadsden counties in Florida. He also served as a visiting professor at the graduate level in the College of Education at Florida State University. Administrative positions held include curriculum coordinator, assessment coordinator, assistant principal, assistant superintendent for employee relations, assistant superintendent for academic services, and deputy superintendent of schools in the Gadsden School District. He began his association with SACS in the early 1970s serving on school visiting committees and later chairing school visits. He has continued that association to the present time where he is a member of the SACS CASI Florida Council. He is an AdvancED Lead Evaluator and Special Reviewer and has led numerous district and school external reviews. Even though retired, he continues his association with schools and school districts throughout the United States as a consultant for school improvement, organizational development, program evaluation, efficiency reviews, and other areas of educational leadership.</p>
<p>Ms. Paula "Angel" M Cash</p>	<p>Angel Cash graduated from Mississippi State University in 1982 and returned to her home town of Columbus, Georgia where she began her teaching career at Wynnton Elementary. As the first technology teacher in Muscogee County School District, she worked with kindergarten through second grade students in a program called IDEAL – Individual Enhancement of Adult Learning. She became known as the “IDEAL” teacher. Angel’s own education includes: Master’s Degree in Elementary Education, Specialist Degree in Elementary Education, certification in Leadership and Administration, and Gifted Endorsement.</p> <p>Angel presently serves as Director for Gifted Education and Principal for St. Elmo Center for the Gifted (K-5) in Muscogee County School District. Prior to being appointed the Director for Gifted Education, Mrs. Cash was the Elementary Education Curriculum Specialist. Angel has been with Muscogee County for 33 years during which time she was the recipient of the 1997 Teacher of the Year for Wynnton Elementary School, 2003 Teacher of the Year for St. Elmo Center for the Gifted, Top Four Teacher of the Year for Muscogee County School District, 2006 Teacher of the Year for St. Elmo Center for the Gifted, and Top Ten teacher of the Year for Muscogee County.</p> <p>Mrs. Cash began her association with AdvancED, when in 2012 she served as the Muscogee County School District Accreditation Chair. Angel has had the opportunity to serve on several External Review Team within the state of Georgia.</p>

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Mary Anne Hipp	<p>As a retired school administrator, Mary Anne Hipp currently serves as a Lead Evaluator for AdvancED and provides educational consulting services to school personnel and boards. She holds Bachelor and Master degrees in Music Education, certifications in Elementary Education and Early Childhood, and a Master +30 in Educational Leadership. She has 47 years of experience across the United States, serving as teacher, Catholic school administrator, Director of Bayou Charter School for Dyslexic Students, and Consultant for the Recovery School District of Louisiana. For the past five years she has been Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Ashton School in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She enjoys educational writing and has been a contributing author on several American and International educational blogs.</p> <p>Certifications:</p> <p>ELEOT Certification (Active)</p>
Mrs. Glenda Griffin Jernigan	<p>Glenda Jernigan is a Primary Literacy Coordinator in the Tift County School System, serving at Omega Elementary School and Tift Co. Pre-K. She received her B. S. in Early Childhood Education from Brewton Parker College, her Masters in Reading from Grand Canyon University, and Education Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction with ESOL Endorsement from Valdosta State University. She taught second grade for four years prior to becoming a Literacy Coordinator, where she has served for seven years. This is her first experience serving on AdvancED External Review Team.</p>
Mrs. Melanie Sanders	<p>Melanie Sanders currently serves as an Assistant Principal in Clay County, Florida. She completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Special Education from the University of Florida and completed master's level coursework for Educational Leadership Certification at the University of North Florida. Her background is diverse, having worked with students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade; and being skilled as a Behavior Resource Teacher as well as holding her Reading Endorsement in Florida.</p>
Mrs. Saralyn Grace Stapleton	<p>Saralyn graduated from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education and began her teaching career at Statham Elementary School in Barrow County. She returned to her home town of Hazlehurst, Georgia and began teaching first grade at Jeff Davis Primary School in 1985. She continued her own education with a Masters in Early Childhood from Georgia Southern University and a Specialist's in Early Childhood from Mercer University. Saralyn also earned endorsements in Reading and Instructional Supervision as well as a degree in Leadership and Administration from Georgia Southern University. Mrs. Stapleton has served the students of Jeff Davis County Schools in various positions including First Grade teacher, Primary Title I Reading Teacher, Instructional Lead Teacher, Reading Excellence Act (REA) Family Literacy Coordinator, REA Literacy Coach, and 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant Project Director. She is currently the Director of Jeff Davis County BOE Pre-K and coordinates the Birth to Five component of the Jeff Davis County Striving Reader Grant. Saralyn is married to Dr. David Stapleton who currently teaches Anatomy and Physiology and Biology at Jeff Davis High School. They have two daughters, Beth and Candice. Beth and her husband, Chris Davis, teach and coach in Jeff Davis County. Candice is a Pediatric Physician's Assistant in Vidalia, GA and is engaged to be married in April. The Stapletons have been blessed with two beautiful grandchildren, Addi and Jeremiah. Although this is Saralyn's first experience serving on an AdvancED external review team, she has worked closely with the SACS accreditation process in Jeff Davis County during previous years.</p>

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Mr. C.J. Wilder</p>	<p>C.J. Wilder has been in education for fourteen years. In his tenure, he has served as a high school French teacher, Modern Languages department chair, and most recently as an assistant principal in middle grades.</p> <p>Mr. Wilder is an accomplished teacher. Soon after earning his M.Ed. in Foreign Language Education, Mr. Wilder was selected as Barrow County's Teacher of the Year in 2010. Mr. Wilder prides himself in the embrace of technology as a conduit for educating today's students.</p> <p>Mr. Wilder is currently serving in his second year as assistant principal in a rural middle school in Northeast Georgia. He is completing his doctorate in Educational Administration and Policy from this University of Georgia and will graduate in 2015. Mr. Wilder feels strongly that a distributed approach to leadership is a necessary tool in order for today's schools to be successful in a changing educational landscape where policy and praxis continue to redefine educational aims and outcomes.</p> <p>Mr. Wilder has presented at two national conferences and two state conferences on the impact of student relationships and technology in the classroom. In 2013, he was selected as a recipient of the Lawrence-Stockton Scholarship for Educational Leadership Award. In 2014, he was honored as recipient of both the UGA John D. Mullen Scholarship Award for Educational Leadership and the Georgia Association of Educational Leader's (GAEL) John Yates Scholarship.</p> <p>Mr. Wilder has been a part of three different accreditations as a teacher. In his current position as an assistant principal, he has directed and completed the Internal Review for his school and district's upcoming External Review in March (2015). He is convinced that serving on both Internal and External reviews has provided him with a real-life professional learning experience designed to focus on continuous school improvement.</p> <p>C.J. Wilder is married to Elaine Wilder who teaches Honors American Literature and AP Literature in Jefferson, Georgia where they live. They have a seven year-old daughter, Kinsey, who is in first grade.</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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