Report of the External Review

for

Clinch County School System

46 S. College Street

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US

Dr. Donna Ryan, Superintendent

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Introduction to the External Review

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

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

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. External Review is a rigorous process that includes examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

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

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

Findings

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

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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

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

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

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	2.71

Standard 1: 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.

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

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

Standard 1			
The 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		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	• Interviews • Governing body policies, procedures, and practices • District purpose statements - past and present • Survey results • Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders • Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) • Observations • Minutes from meetings related to development of the district's purpose and direction • Accreditation Report • Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the district's purpose	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	• Survey results • Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements • Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement • Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews	2.0
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.	• Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders about educational programs and equitable learning experiences • Observations • Interviews • Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning • Discussions regarding staff development topics to enhance academic development	3.0
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.	• Interviews • Accreditation Report • Examples of schools continuous improvement plans • Survey results • Observations • Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings • Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders	3.0

Powerful Practices   *Indicator*

1. All stakeholder groups take ownership in the school district and expressed a willingness to   1.3
    support the new leadership to ensure that the Clinch County School System remains a
    vital part of the community.

    Although all stakeholder groups were not actively involved in developing the purpose and
    direction statement for the district, all stakeholders interviewed expressed pride and
    support for the district, indicating a very strong desire to improve the district in all aspects.
    The External Review Team was frequently reminded of the multi-generational connection
    of families residing in the Clinch County community. This strong community support will,
    inevitably, be beneficial as the leadership continues its pursuit of educational excellence.

Standard 2: The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.

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

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

Standard 2			
The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	• Interviews • Observations • Student handbooks • Accreditation Report • District operations manuals	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	• Governing authority minutes relating to training • Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest • Proof of legal counsel • Governing authority training plan • Assurances, certifications • Accreditation Report • Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies • Observations • Interviews • Governing code of ethics	3.0
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.	• Communications regarding governing authority actions • District strategic plan • Examples of school improvement plans • Roles and responsibilities of school leadership • Roles and responsibilities of district leadership • Observations • Interviews • Social media • Accreditation Report • Survey results regarding functions of the governing authority and operations of the district • Stakeholder input and feedback • Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation • Agendas and minutes of meetings	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	• Professional development offerings and plans • Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Examples of decisions aligned with the school's purpose statement • Interviews • Survey results • Observations • Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans • Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs • Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction • Accreditation Report	3.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	• Accreditation Report • Minutes from meetings with stakeholders • Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action • Interviews • Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys • Survey responses • Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan • Observations	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	• Interviews • Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation • Accreditation Report • Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation • Job specific criteria • Observations • Representative supervision and evaluation reports	3.0

Opportunities for Improvement   *Indicator*

1. Codify the various district procedures currently established for inclusion in a District Procedures Manual.

   A review of artifacts and discussions with various stakeholder groups revealed that, although most stakeholders appear to be knowledgeable of the various procedures utilized in the district, a formal procedures manual codifying these procedures is currently non-existent. The recent turnover in staff further supports the need to codify district procedures. Providing guidelines and procedures for staff in written format will enhance awareness of policies and promote consistency in implementation.

                                                                                                                      2.1

Standard 3: The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

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

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

Standard 3
The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	• Interviews • Course, program, or school schedules • Student work across courses or programs • Course or program descriptions • Survey results • Lesson plans • Observations • Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices • Accreditation Report	3.0
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.	• Curriculum guides • A description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment • Accreditation Report • Surveys results • Observations • Interviews • Program descriptions • Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices • Curriculum writing process • Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	• Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource • Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool • Surveys results • Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Observations	3.0
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	• Accreditation Report • Supervision and evaluation procedures • Documentation of collection of lesson plans, grade books, or other data record systems • Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions • Surveys results • Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs • Interviews • Observations • Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	- Observations - Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees - Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings - Survey results - Interviews - Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning - Accreditation Report	3.0
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	- Observations - Survey results - Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction - Interviews - Accreditation Report - Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning	3.0
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	- Accreditation Report - Survey results - Observations - Interviews	2.0
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.	- Observations - Survey results - List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days - Accreditation Report - Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress - Interviews	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	• Curriculum and activities of structures for adults advocating on behalf of students • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Interviews • Observations	3.0
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	• Interviews • Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices • Survey results • Observations • Accreditation Report • Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting	3.0
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	• Survey results • Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs • Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews	2.0
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	• Survey results • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Observations • Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning • Data used to identify unique learning needs of students	3.0

Powerful Practices   *Indicator*

1. The system has a communication process in place that includes a variety of methods to   3.8
    inform and engage families in meaningful ways regarding their children's learning
    progress.

    Discussions with instructional staff members and parents revealed a strong perception of
    and satisfaction with the formal and informal communication efforts employed by the
    school system. School and district leaders provide opportunities to actively engage
    families in their children's education through formal conferences with parents, weekly
    newsletters, social media, text messages, e-mail messages, Remind 101, PowerSchool,
    the Parent Involvement Center, and AlertNow. In addition, numerous comments reflected
    the importance of informal meetings at local community functions, church, and local
    stores, sometimes accommodating work schedules of those who are unable to attend
    parent meetings at school. Providing numerous opportunities for parents to obtain
    information about their children's academic progress fosters student success and parental
    support.

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

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

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in the 30,000 institutions in the AdvancED network that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff members to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	• Accreditation Report • Survey results • District budgets or financial plans for the last three years • Observations • Interviews • Assessments of staffing needs • Documentation of highly qualified staff • Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools	3.0
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.	• Observations • Examples of school schedules • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Examples of school calendars • Interviews	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	• District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments • Interviews • Observations • Accreditation Report • Example systems for school maintenance requests • Survey results • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments • Example maintenance schedules for schools • School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes • Example school records of depreciation of equipment	3.0
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	• Survey results • Interviews • Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments • Accreditation Report • Observations	2.0
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	• Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Data on media and information resources available to students and staff • Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	• Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model • Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level • Survey results • District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Examples of school-level technology plans and budgets to improve technology services and infrastructure to students and staff • Observations	3.0
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.	• Observations • Interviews • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills • Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education • List of support services available to students	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	• List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning • Description of IEP process • Observations • Interviews • CCES Title I Schoolwide/School Improvement Plan	3.0

Standard 5: 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.

Systems with strong improvement processes move beyond anxiety about the current reality and focus on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, i.e., data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, and Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R., 2005). The study also identified six key strategies that performance-driven systems use: (1) building a foundation for data-driven decision making, (2) establishing a culture of data use and continuous improvement, (3) investing in an information management system, (4) selecting the right data, (5) building institutional capacity for data-driven decision making, and (6) analyzing and acting on data to improve performance. Other research studies, though largely without comparison groups, suggested that data-driven decision making has the potential to increase student performance (Alwin, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Lafee, 2002; McIntire, 2002).

Through ongoing evaluation of educational institutions, AdvancED has found that a successful institution uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine strategies to improve student performance. The institution implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained, and the institution demonstrates progress in improving student performance and institution effectiveness.
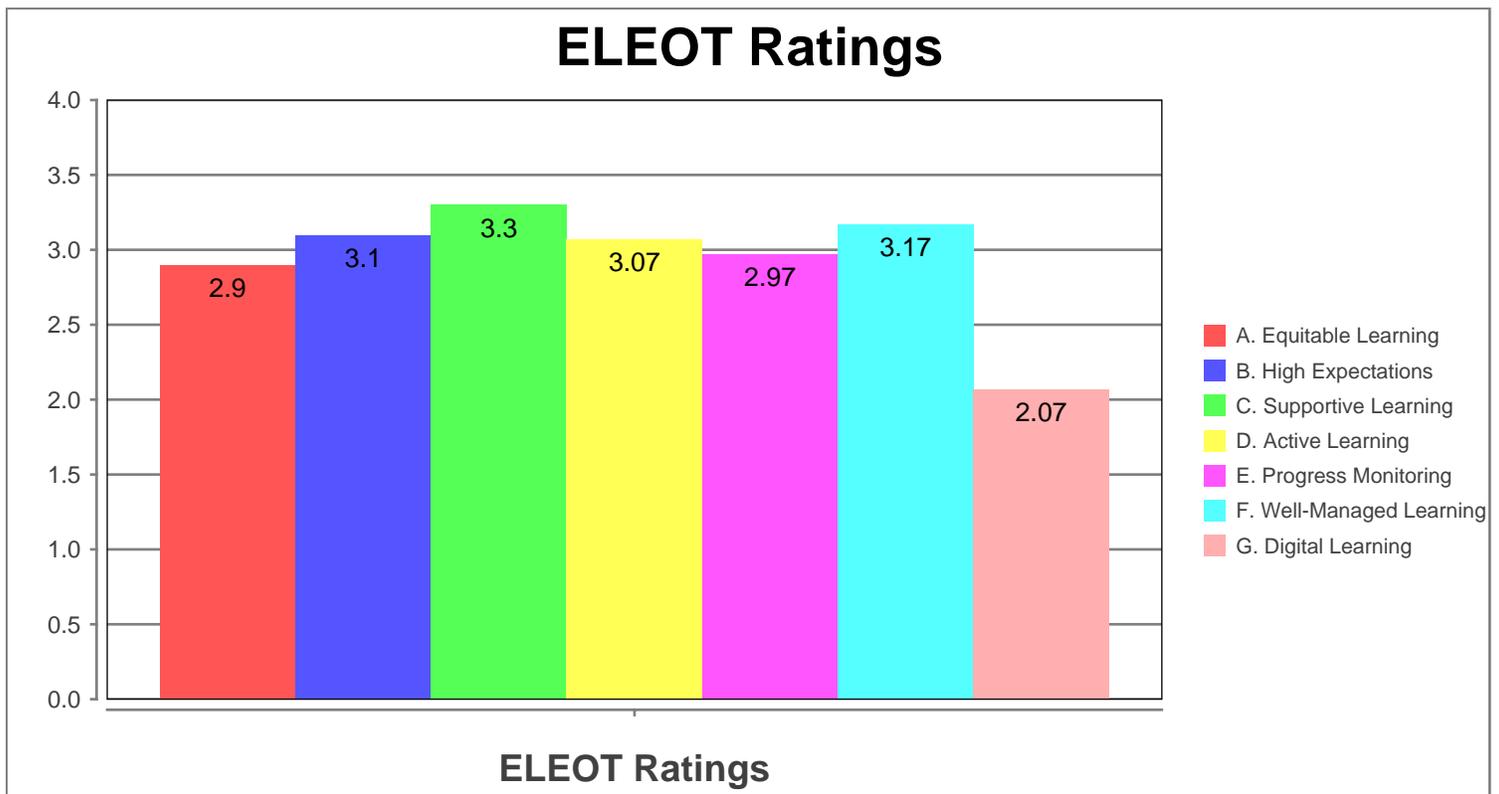
Standard 5			
The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	• Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols • Survey results • Interviews • Observations • Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness • Accreditation Report • Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	• Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning • Observations • Accreditation Report • List of data sources related to district effectiveness • Survey results • Interviews	2.0
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	• Accreditation Report • Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data • Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data • Interviews • Policies and written procedures specific to data training	1.0
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.	• Interviews • Accreditation Report • Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning • Observations • Evidence of student readiness for the next level	2.0
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.	• Accreditation Report • Survey results • Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals • Observations • Interviews	3.0

Learning Environment

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

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.

ELEOT Ratings

Environment	Rating
A. Equitable Learning	2.9
B. High Expectations	3.1
C. Supportive Learning	3.3
D. Active Learning	3.07
E. Progress Monitoring	2.97
F. Well-Managed Learning	3.17
G. Digital Learning	2.07

Student Performance

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

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

Stakeholder Feedback

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

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

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

Individual Institution Results

AdvancED requires internal and external stakeholders from each individual institution within the system to evaluate their institution on the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools, student performance, and stakeholder feedback. The following table provides the results of those self-analyses. Higher scores indicate higher perceived performance on each of the measures. The range of possible scores for each of the institutions within the system are 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing).

Institution	Indicator Averages	Questionnaire Administration	Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	Assessment Quality	Test Administration	Quality of Learning	Equity of Learning
Clinch County Elementary School	3.13	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0
Clinch County High School	2.85	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0
Clinch County Middle School	3.15	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0

Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

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

An External Review Team composed of five educators representing AdvancEd conducted an external review for the Clinch County School System in Homerville, GA, on February 9 - 12, 2014. Artifacts were made available for the team to review at the hotel and at the central office. Team members reviewed artifacts, collected and analyzed data acquired through interview sessions, and conducted classroom observations to secure information regarding teaching and learning. The External Review Team interviewed 128 stakeholders, including 14 students, 45 teachers, 20 support staff, 35 parents and community members, 4 board members, and 10 district and school administrators. The team visited the three schools in the district and the Alternative Education Program, which is housed at the Transportation Facility. Forty-seven classroom observations were completed using the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool (ELEOT).

Conversations with district and school staff revealed that the district values the accreditation process and made significant preparations to facilitate a well-organized visit. Although the External Review Team was able to confirm some of the information included in the documents received prior to the visit, a few items were not verifiable.   It was quite evident that the district and school staffs and students were prepared for the visit by the External Review Team.

Of major importance and consideration is the fact that the Clinch County School System hired the current superintendent in July, 2013. The candidate selected is new to the Clinch County School System and is proposing new initiatives, designed to effect a paradigm shift for the entire school district.

During the presentation of the Superintendent's Overview, the team was informed of the numerous challenges of the district, including recent changes in administration at the school level; the recruitment and retention of a diverse instructional staff; the closure of the charter school in Fargo (located about 28 miles from Homerville), which served eight students in grades K-2; and the development of a plan to provide transportation services for all students currently residing in the Fargo area. Determining which of the vivid needs are the most valid ones was also cited as a challenge.

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

Following interviews, observations, and further review of documentation, the External Review Team engaged in dialogue and deliberations regarding the degree to which the district met AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. The External Review Team commends the district for the installation of 64 security cameras at the high school and 72 at the elementary/middle school campus, which foster a greater feeling of safety and protection systemically. Recurring themes considered powerful practices by the External Review Team included: (a) the various methods of communication utilized to provide information to parents regarding their children's academic

progress; and, (b) the unity of the community in their desire to support the new leadership in helping to improve the Clinch County School System.

One opportunity for improvement was noted, which indicates a need to codify district procedures currently in practice to ensure consistency in implementation system wide.

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

The classroom observations were quite telling. The majority of the classrooms at all levels revealed supportive and well-managed learning environments with high expectations. The External Review Team noted that the prevalent teaching methodology was teacher-centered, with the majority of teachers lecturing or using handouts and worksheets, as opposed to the use of differentiated instructional strategies or other engaging activities. Comments from various stakeholders confirmed the need to improve instruction and increase course offerings at the high school level, specifying the need to restore the vocational classes eliminated.

The team also determined that the use of technology was very limited systemically. Although technological tools were available in many classrooms, they were not being utilized by the students. A few classroom teachers used power point presentations or SmartBoards during instruction. However, only a few teachers incorporated the utilization of technological tools by students during the External Review Team's classroom observations. This finding was confirmed during interviews with various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholders indicated support for and confidence in the new superintendent, noting her participation in community events throughout the county. She is viewed as a student-centered instructional leader who has a desire to employ new initiatives as the district continues its mission of, "…encouraging students in the pursuit of a quality education..."

The External Review Team found the stakeholders to be exceptionally proud of their district. As the visit continued, the team heard such descriptors as, "family, devoted, committed, caring, awesome, courageous, understanding, supportive, safe, unified, resourceful, flexible, determined, professional, challenging, improving, successful, adaptable, excellence, superb, growing, dedication, willing, compassionate, heart, driven, pride, love, friendly, outstanding, superior, achievement, home, community-oriented," to portray the culture of the Clinch County School System.

The External Review Team extends appreciation to the board members, superintendent, administration, staff, students, parents, and community members for the hospitality, support, and professionalism demonstrated during the visit. Special appreciation is extended to the district's AdvancED Liaison for working collaboratively with the Lead Evaluator to enhance the success of the visit. The team is appreciative of the hard work required to organize and host the External Review Visit.

The team commends the system for its efforts toward continuous school improvement and its commitment to the district's mission of "encouraging students in the pursuit of a quality education "

In the past, accreditation reviews resulted in an accreditation recommendation on status. Labels such as advised, warned, probation, or all clear were used to describe the status of a school relative to the criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED is introducing a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduces an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Educational Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; and 3) use of resources to support and optimize learning. Therefore, your institution will no longer receive an accreditation status. Instead, your institution will be accredited with an IEQ score. In the case where an institution is failing to meet established criteria, the accreditation will be under review, thereby requiring frequent monitoring.

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

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

IEQ Institutional Score: 283

Teaching and Learning Impact: 276
(Standards 3 and 5; Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 292
(Standards 1 and 2; Stakeholder Engagement Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 288
(Standard 4)

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

Improvement Priority

1. Develop and implement a plan to ensure that all professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data, including a component to enable educators to train parents and students in comprehending individualized student data.

   Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
   5.3 Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.

   Description:
   A review of the artifacts and comments from various stakeholder groups revealed the lack of the systematic utilization and understanding of the value in using data to drive decision making and classroom daily instruction. Providing training for stakeholders in the effective use of data will strengthen improvement efforts district wide and, ultimately, improve student achievement and development.

2. Develop and implement a process to review, analyze, and utilize data to drive decision-making for implementation of interventions and programs; evaluate the program following implementation for effectiveness.

   Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
   5.2 Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.

   Description:
   A review of artifacts and discussions with stakeholders revealed the need for a process to systemically and systematically review, analyze, and utilize data when making decisions for system improvement. Utilizing data in the course of decision-making strengthens the improvement process while ensuring a focus on areas of need.

3. Develop and implement a systemic, systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a systemic purpose for student success; involve randomly selected representatives from all stakeholder groups.

   Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
   1.1 The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.

   Description:
   A review of artifacts and comments during interview sessions revealed that the system does not have a systematic process in place for the review and revision of the vision, mission, and belief statements. The

External Review Team determined that the current statements were developed in 2007. The systematic review and possible revision of the vision, mission, and belief statements, with input from representatives of all stakeholder groups, will enhance support and buy-in, while ensuring a focus on the goals and objectives deemed appropriate by current stakeholders.

4. Develop and implement policies and procedures to ensure that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.

    Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
    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.

    Description:
    Comments during interview sessions and a review of artifacts indicated that the district does not currently have a process in place to ensure that schools systematically review the vision, mission, and belief statements. Establishing vision, mission, and belief statements with input from all stakeholder groups will enhance support for meeting the goals and ensure that all are focusing on the same goals.

5. Develop and implement procedures to ensure that system and school leaders formally monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices, including the use of instructional technology by students, to foster student success.

    Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
    3.4 System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.

    Description:
    Discussions during interview sessions with various stakeholder groups, classroom observations, and a review of artifacts revealed that the district has not developed or implemented a formal process to monitor instructional practices. Developing and implementing a formal process to consistently monitor instructional practices through supervision and evaluation procedures will foster the alignment of instructional strategies with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning; enhance consistency in the utilization of the approved curriculum; increase student involvement in the oversight of their learning; and ensure the use content-specific standards of professional practice.

6. Develop and implement the Clinch County School System Strategic Plan, involving representatives from all stakeholder groups in the process.

    Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
    4.4 The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.

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Description:

This document should be presented, implemented, and evaluated by the governing body, system leadership, and school leadership. The External Review Team determined that the Clinch County School System's Strategic Plan is currently in the discussion phase only. The process to develop the document has not been established. The development and implementation of a long range strategic plan can better support the purpose and direction of the school system, while providing guidance in the areas of budget, facilities, and other strategic system components.

7. Devise and implement a continuous improvement process to systemically and systematically evaluate student learning, focusing on readiness for and success at the next level.

   Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
   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.

   Description:
   A review of documents and interviews with stakeholders revealed the need to evaluate improvement in student learning as a part of the continuous improvement process. The implementation of a process to analyze student learning by level will assist in determining professional development needs; allow the professional staff to individualize instruction; and ensure a focus on the identified areas of need system wide.

8. Establish and implement a professional development plan for all instructional and support staff of Clinch County School System, with continuous evaluation to measure its validity and impact on instructional improvement.

   Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
   3.11 All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.

   Description:
   A review of artifacts and discussions with staff revealed minimal evidence of the provision of professional learning activities for all staff members. The External Review Team did not find a formal plan to assist with professional growth and development. Several instructional staff members indicated the need to participate in training sessions to enhance the instructional program. Developing and implementing a systemic professional development plan will positively impact instruction and, ultimately, student learning and success.

9. Establish and implement a professional development plan to include a mentoring and coaching component for current instructional staff needing assistance in improving instructional strategies, as well as for those educators new to the Clinch County School System.

   Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):
   3.7 Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Description:

The External Review Team found minimal evidence to indicate that professional learning is aligned to and evaluated for the improvement of student learning. A review of documentation and comments during interview sessions revealed the need for additional support for instructional staff to assist them in meeting the students' individual needs. The implementation of professional learning programs can be effective in impacting student learning when based on data that are continuously analyzed and evaluated.

Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:
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Associate Lead Evaluator:
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Reviewer:
Dr. David E Spellman

Team Member:
Mrs. Magaly Medina-Perez

Dr. James G Pulos

Dr. Andrea Scandrett

Next Steps

The institution should:

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

Celebrating Accreditation

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

About AdvancED

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) that was founded in 1917 joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students.

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

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