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AdvancED®
Engagement
Review Report
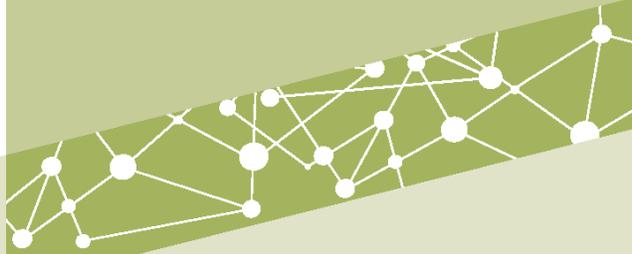
AdvancED®

AdvancED® Performance Accreditation

Results for:

Whitfield County School System
1306 South Thornton Avenue
Dalton, Georgia 30720

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Introduction

AdvancED Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

Accreditation is pivotal to leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research-based standards, the accreditation process examines the whole institution—the program, the cultural context and the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of learners. Through the AdvancED Accreditation Process, highly skilled and trained Engagement Review Teams gather first-hand evidence and information pertinent to evaluating an institution's performance against the research-based AdvancED Performance Standards. Using these Standards, Engagement Review Teams assess the quality of learning environments to gain valuable insights and target improvements in teaching and learning. AdvancED provides Standards that are tailored for all education providers so that the benefits of accreditation are universal across the education community.

Through a comprehensive review of evidence and information, our experts gain a broad understanding of institution quality. Using the Standards, the review team provides valuable feedback to institutions which helps to focus and guide each institution's improvement journey. Valuable evidence and information from other stakeholders, including students, also are obtained through interviews, surveys, and additional activities.

AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results

The AdvancED Performance Standards Diagnostic is used by the Engagement Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on AdvancED's Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of the three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity** and **Resource Capacity**. Results are reported within four ranges identified by the colors. The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

Color	Rating	Description
Red	Needs Improvement	Identifies key areas that need more focused improvement efforts
Yellow	Emerging	Represents areas to enhance and extend current improvement efforts
Green	Meets Expectations	Pinpoints quality practices that meet the Standards
Blue	Exceeds Expectations	Demonstrates noteworthy practices producing clear results that exceed expectations

Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress toward its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its 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 implement strategies that improve learner and educator performance.

Leadership Capacity Standards		Rating
1.1	The system commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners.	Exceeds Expectations
1.2	Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the system's purpose and desired outcomes for learning.	Meets Expectations
1.3	The system engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.	Exceeds Expectations
1.4	The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support system effectiveness.	Exceeds Expectations
1.5	The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.	Emerging
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.	Exceeds Expectations
1.7	Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.	Exceeds Expectations
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the system's purpose and direction.	Emerging
1.9	The system provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.	Exceeds Expectations
1.10	Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.	Emerging
1.11	Leaders implement a quality assurance process for its institutions to ensure system effectiveness and consistency.	Emerging

Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement and success is the primary expectation of every institution. An effective learning culture is characterized by positive and productive teacher/learner relationships; high expectations and standards; a challenging and engaging curriculum; quality instruction and comprehensive support that enable all learners to be successful; and assessment practices (formative and summative) that monitor and measure learner progress and achievement. Moreover, a quality institution evaluates the impact of its learning culture, including all programs and support services and adjusts accordingly.

Learning Capacity Standards		Rating
2.1	Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the system.	Emerging
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving.	Needs Improvement
2.3	The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs and skills needed for success.	Meets Expectations
2.4	The system has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers that support their educational experiences.	Needs Improvement
2.5	Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.	Meets Expectations

Learning Capacity Standards		Rating
2.6	The system implements a process to ensure the curriculum is clearly aligned to standards and best practices.	Meets Expectations
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the system's learning expectations.	Meets Expectations
2.8	The system provides programs and services for learners' educational future and career planning.	Meets Expectations
2.9	The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners.	Meets Expectations
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.	Emerging
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.	Meets Expectations
2.12	The system implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.	Emerging

Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably so the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The institution examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, organizational effectiveness, and increased student learning.

Resource Capacity Standards		Rating
3.1	The system plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the system's effectiveness.	Exceeds Expectations
3.2	The system's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.	Meets Expectations
3.3	The system provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.	Meets Expectations
3.4	The system attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the system's purpose and direction.	Meets Expectations
3.5	The system integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.	Emerging
3.6	The system provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the system.	Emerging
3.7	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the system's purpose and direction.	Exceeds Expectations
3.8	The system allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the system's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.	Exceeds Expectations

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) Results

The AdvancED eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) is a learner-centric classroom observation tool that comprises 28 items organized in seven environments aligned with the AdvancED Standards. Classroom observations are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes. Trained and certified observers take into account the level of embeddedness, quality, and complexity of application or implementation; number of students engaged and frequency of application. Results from the eleot are reported on a scale of one to four based on the students' engagement in and reaction to the learning environment. In addition to the results from the review, the AdvancED Improvement Network (AIN) results are reported to benchmark your results against the network averages. The eleot provides useful, relevant, structured, and quantifiable data on the extent to which students are engaged in activities and/or demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and/or dispositions that are conducive to effective learning.

The insights eleot data provide are an invaluable source of information for continuous improvement planning efforts. Although averages by eleot Learning Environment are helpful to gauge quality at a higher, more impressionistic level, the average rating for each item is more fine-grained, specific and actionable. Institutions should identify the five to seven items with the lowest ratings and examine patterns in those ratings within and across environments to identify areas for improvement. Similarly, identifying the five to seven items with the highest ratings also will assist in identifying strengths within and across eleot Learning Environments. Examining the eleot data in conjunction with other institution data will provide valuable feedback on areas of strength or improvement in institution's learning environments.

eleot® Observation		
Total Number of eleot® Observations	**60**	
Environments	**Rating**	**AIN**
Equitable Learning Environment	3.09	2.86
Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs	2.56	1.89
Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	3.66	3.74
Learners are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner	3.69	3.77
Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions	2.44	2.06
High Expectations Environment	2.89	3.02
Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher	2.90	3.17
Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	3.01	3.14
Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work	2.77	2.83
Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	2.86	3.06
Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning	2.92	2.89
Supportive Learning Environment	3.53	3.61
Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful	3.51	3.66

eleot® Observation		
Total Number of eleot® Observations	**60**	
Environments	**Rating**	**AIN**
Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	3.45	3.49
Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks	3.52	3.66
Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher	3.65	3.66
Active Learning Environment	2.99	3.08
Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and the teacher predominate	3.10	3.34
Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences	2.70	2.80
Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities	3.30	3.43
Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments	2.87	2.74
Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	2.85	3.14
Learners monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored	2.75	3.20
Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work	3.01	3.37
Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content	2.99	3.37
Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed	2.63	2.63
Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.69	3.58
Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other	3.76	3.86
Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others	3.72	3.83
Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another	3.65	3.09
Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions	3.65	3.54
Digital Learning Environment	1.76	1.50
Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	1.82	1.60
Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	1.77	1.46
Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and/or work collaboratively for learning	1.68	1.46

Assurances

Assurances are statements accredited institutions must confirm they are meeting. The Assurance statements are based on the type of institution and the responses are confirmed by the Accreditation Engagement Review Team. Institutions are expected to meet all Assurances and are expected to correct any deficiencies in unmet Assurances.

Assurances			
Met	**X**	Unmet	
Unmet Assurances			

AdvancED Continuous Improvement System

AdvancED defines continuous improvement as "an embedded behavior rooted in an institution's culture that constantly focuses on conditions, processes, and practices to improve teaching and learning." The AdvancED Continuous Improvement System (CIS) provides a systemic fully integrated solution to help institutions map out and navigate a successful improvement journey. In the same manner that educators are expected to understand the unique needs of every learner and tailor the education experience to drive student success, every institution must be empowered to map out and embrace their unique improvement journey. AdvancED expects institutions to use the results and the analysis of data from various interwoven components for the implementation of improvement actions to drive education quality and improved student outcomes. While each improvement journey is unique, the journey is driven by key actions.

The findings of the Engagement Review Team will be organized by the Levels of Impact within i3: Initiate, Improve and Impact. The organization of the findings is based upon the ratings from the Standards Diagnostic and the i3 Levels of Impact.

Initiate

The first phase of the improvement journey is to **Initiate** actions to cause and achieve better results. The elements of the Initiate phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Engagement and Implementation. Engagement is the level of involvement and frequency stakeholders are engaged in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. Implementation is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are monitored and adjusted for quality and fidelity of implementation. Standards identified within Initiate should become the focus of the institution's continuous improvement journey to move toward the collection, analysis and use of data to measure the results of engagement and implementation. A focus on enhancing the capacity of the institution in meeting the identified Standards has the greatest potential impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Improve

The second phase of the improvement journey is to gather and evaluate the results of actions to **Improve**. The elements of the **Improve** phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Results and Sustainability. Results represents the collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired result(s). Sustainability is results achieved consistently to demonstrate growth and improvement over time (minimum of three years). Standards identified within Improve are those in which the institution is using results to inform their continuous improvement processes and using results over time to demonstrate the achievement of goals. The institution should continue to analyze and use results to guide improvements in student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Impact

The third phase of achieving improvement is **Impact** where desired practices are deeply entrenched. The elements of the **Impact** phase are defined within the Level of Impact of Embeddedness. Embeddedness is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are deeply ingrained in the culture and operation of the institution. Standards identified within Impact are those in which the institution has demonstrated ongoing growth and improvement over time and has embedded the practices within the culture of the institution. Institutions should continue to support and sustain these practices that are yielding results in improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Findings

The findings in this report represent the degree to which the Accreditation Standards are effectively implemented in support of the learning environment and the mission of the institution. Standards which are identified in the **Initiate** phase of practice are considered Priorities for Improvement that must be addressed by the institution to retain accreditation.   Standards which are identified in the **Improve** phase of practice are considered Opportunities for Improvement that the institution should consider. Standards which are identified in the **Impact** phase of practice are considered Effective Practices within the institution.

i3 Rubric Levels	STANDARDS
Initiate Priorities for Improvement	Standards 2.2, 2.4, 3.6
Improve Opportunities for Improvement	Standards 1.5, 1.8, 1.10, 1.11 Standards 2.1, 2.5, 2.10, 2.12 Standard 3.5
Impact Effective Practices	Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9 Standards 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.11 Standards 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8

Accreditation Recommendation and Index of Education Quality® (IEQ®)

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

AdvancED provides the Index of Education Quality® (IEQ®) as a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus. The IEQ is comprised of the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: 1) Leadership Capacity; 2) Learning Capacity; and 3) Resource Capacity. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provides information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria. Institutions should review the IEQ in relation to the Findings from the review in the areas of Initiate, Improve and Impact. An IEQ score below 250 indicates that the institution has several areas within the Initiate level and should focus their improvement efforts on those Standards within the Initiate level. An IEQ in the range of 225-300 indicates that the institution has several Standards within the Improve level and is using results to inform continuous improvement and demonstrate sustainability. An IEQ of 275 and above indicates the institution is beginning to reach the Impact level and is engaged in practices that are sustained over time and are becoming ingrained in the culture of the institution.

Below is the average (range) of all AIN institutions evaluated for accreditation in the last five years. The range of the annual AIN IEQ average is presented to enable you to benchmark your results with other institutions in the network.

Institution IEQ	310.48	AIN 5 Year IEQ Range	278.34 – 283.33

Insights from the Review

The Engagement Review Team engaged in professional discussions and deliberations about the processes, programs and practices within the institution to arrive at the findings of the team. These findings are organized around themes guided by the evidence, examples of programs and practices and provide direction for the institution's continuous improvement efforts. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide contextualized information from the team deliberations and provide information about the team's analysis of the practices, processes, and programs of the institution from the levels of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide next steps to guide the improvement journey of the institution in its efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Accreditation Engagement Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on its current improvement efforts and to adapt and adjust their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

A number of themes aligned to the continuous improvement process for the Whitfield County School System were identified by the Engagement Review Team. These themes represent areas of strength and opportunities which provide a guide as the system continues the improvement journey.

The system's comprehensive and effective strategic resource management and allocation strategies ensure that resources are tightly aligned with the system's mission and vision. In response to a number of financial challenges, system leaders implemented budgeting and operational procedures to ensure that all departments and schools maintain human, financial and capital resources necessary to provide high-quality instruction. The superintendent initiated and implemented a zero-based approach to budgeting in all schools and departments, basing budget requests on school and department needs as opposed to the previous year's budget allocation process. As a result of this budget strategy, the current fund balance reserve is at 20.6% of the general fund budget, representing approximately 2.5 months of the system's budget. A comprehensive collection of standard operating procedures were adopted and implemented with fidelity. For example, the Administrators Guide to Operations Services documents processes and procedures related to transportation, technology, school safety, procurement and school nutrition. The finance department's Accounting Procedures Manual provides detailed financial operations guidance to schools. As a result, the system's most recent financial audit produced no findings. Evidence reviewed by the team included summaries of surveys administered annually by all departments. System leaders described how the results of those surveys are used to monitor and adjust operating procedures. Implementing continuous improvement and monitoring processes in all departments has produced tangible results and benefits. In addition to the fund balance reserve, the system's energy conservation effort resulted in savings of $217,000. The school nutrition program is self-sustaining. In addition, the percentage of the system's budget allocated to instruction versus administration has increased each year since 2015. The system earned 3.5 stars on its Financial Efficiency Rating, which is higher than the state average of three stars. Students actively support the system's conservation initiative. As one principal noted, "Our students have thoroughly embraced the conservation movement in our recycling efforts and that has parlayed perfectly into the energy saving efforts of the district. It has really just become what we do." According to district leaders, those savings have been used to complete much-needed facilities improvements. The team recommends that the system protects the leaders' careful and consistent stewardship of system resources to increase and enhance the capacity of schools to meet the array of academic and social needs of their students.

A system of ongoing job-embedded professional development provides the support that teachers require to build their capacity for high quality literacy instruction. All teachers participate in job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the district's strategic plan goals, is informed by review of student achievement data and teacher input, and is monitored by consistently implemented instructional monitoring processes. The system implemented a comprehensive, multi-year literacy initiative aimed at increasing the number of students who are reading on or above grade level. The initiative is guided by the system's K-12 Literacy Beliefs which define the system's approach to literacy instruction. According to the system's 2016 Strategic Plan Progress Report,

teachers participated in over 1,800 hours of literacy training. As part of that initiative, the system's teachers are trained in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). SIOP was initially identified as model to support English Language Learners, but leaders believe that all students will benefit from the instructional model. As one leader said in describing the system's approach to professional development, "We do not do sit and get. We have a long-term plan. When we bring them together, we know they're going to follow-up. We maintain emphasis over period of years. We survey after every professional learning that we use to plan the next session." Content of each professional development session is based on a review of school-level data by the system's Teaching and Learning Team. In turn, teachers participate in monthly professional development facilitated by school-based instructional coaches. Those coaches monitor teachers' implementation of training and classroom monitoring, and data are used to define the following month's content. Through surveys teachers offer suggestions on improvement and the impact of sessions attended. Surveys are analyzed as part of the planning process for future professional development, and there is follow-up with teachers who indicate a need for additional support. Teachers interviewed by team expressed a consistently high level of appreciation for the system's approach to professional development. As one teacher remarked, "Professional learning feels really personal as part of cohort. We took what we learned and gave feedback to district leaders...I have texted and emailed questions to district leaders with questions and received instant response. Leaders are very responsive to our feedback." Continuing to provide teachers with ongoing professional development, that is informed both by measures of student achievement and results of instructional monitoring, increases teachers' capacity to meet the learning needs of all students and will support the system's strategic plan goals related to teaching and learning.

District and school continuous improvement is tightly aligned in support of the system's vision and mission. The Whitfield County Schools Five-Year Strategic Plan is organized around five goals. The plan's first goal is focused on instruction and assessment. System leaders implemented a number of processes that support the goal's aim, which provides the educational foundation and opportunities to accelerate all students to achieve expected or high academic growth. This goal is supported by objectives connected to increasing rigor of the curriculum, increasing teacher use of effective instructional practices and enhancing measures of students' college and career readiness. During an interview with the team, the superintendent described the system's #OneWhitfield initiative as an attempt to ensure that all schools and departments are moving in the same direction and focusing on similar goals. In support of that effort and the strategic plan's focus on instruction and assessment, system leaders defined and adopted Non-Negotiable Practices for High Performing Students, an instructional framework that guides teaching and learning in all classrooms. The practices within the framework form a basis for the system-wide lesson plan template. The #OneWhitfield Crosswalk document articulates ways that the initiative is aligned with the state's teacher evaluation system, the Non-Negotiable Practices and the use of the eleot tool. The Principals' Companion document provides school leaders with specific guidance on how and when to use the Non-Negotiable Practices as part of their schools' continuous improvement efforts. As part of that guidance, principals across the system review the same data sources each month. District and school leaders, as well as teachers, identified the Non-Negotiables as everyone within the district is expected to know and do. Evidence of the Non-Negotiables was found in the team's eleot observations, most notably in the Well Managed Learning Environment average of 3.69 and the Supportive Learning Environment average of 3.53. Continuing to monitor implementation of the #OneWhitfield intitiative as part of the continuous improvement journey will accelerate the transformation from a system of schools to a true school system.

The system's effort to meet the learning needs of all students has not yet produced ongoing and sustainable increases in measures of learning for all students and subgroups. In addition to the system's strategic plan goal of producing high academic growth for all students, each school improvement plan includes goals connected to enhance student achievement. An example of a goal included in most school plans is to increase achievement level on English Language Arts and Math Milestones by 3%. As well as the significant curriculum development, professional development and instructional monitoring processes implemented by system and school leaders, each school has an Response to Intervention (RTI) structure in place. This structure is intended to provide students with individual interventions and support required to master the system's rigorous instructional standards and to define a common set of interventions. Teachers interviewed by the team identified the variety of formative, benchmark and teacher-made assessments which are used to monitor students' progress. Leaders and teachers are encouraged to ensure that those assessments are closely aligned with the system's instructional standards.

While system staff are justifiably proud of the progress and improvements that have been achieved, sustainable and significant academic growth has not been achieved for all students and all student subgroups. As the superintendent remarked during her interview, "We are better than last year but we're not where we want to be." The team reviewed four years of student achievement data, primarily related to state testing administered between 2015 and 2018 as well as trend data comparing 2017 and 2018 results. The Georgia Milestones results include percentages of students reading at grade level or above as measured by the state testing. Comparing 2015 and 2018 results, growth was achieved at some grade levels. For instance, the percentage of fifth grade students reading at or above grade level increased from 62% to 69%, the sixth grade percentage increased from 55% to 61% and eighth graders produced an increase from 67% to 75%. At other grades, there was little or no increase. The percentage of third grade students dropped slightly from 67% to 66% while the seventh grade percentage dropped from 71% to 69%.The Georgia Department of Education computes a College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) for each school and school system. According to figures on the department's website, the system's most recent CCRPI was 76.3 compared to state average of 76.6. The system's elementary schools earned a 76.2 compared to the state elementary average of 77.8, and the system's high schools' average of 72.8 was slightly below the state average of 75.3. The system's middle schools' CCRPI of 80.8 exceeded the state middle school average of 76.2. The CCRPI report provides "Closing Gaps" data which are related to student subgroup achievement. Achievement gaps were identified for some content areas and some subgroups at elementary, middle and high school levels. The system's elementary school Closing Gaps score was 73.4 compared to the state elementary average of 85.0, and the high school's score of 61.4 fell below the state score of 70.0. It is highly encouraging to note that the system's middle school Closing Gaps score of 90.6 exceeded the state score of 78.8. The system score is based on the fact that economically disadvantaged students met their growth goals in language arts, mathematics, and science while English Language Learners, a growing subgroup in the system, met their growth goals in all four content areas. Eleot observations conducted by the team in 60 classrooms produced abundant evidence of well-managed and supportive classrooms. Relatively lower eleot scores were earned in the High Expectations Environment (2.89) and two descriptors, "Learners demonstrate high quality work" (2.77) and "Learners engage in rigorous coursework…" (2.86). Those results can be used by system leaders to define and inform future professional development focus and priorities, which will support the strategic plan goal to establish a consistent level of rigor in all schools and classrooms. The value, which the system's leaders and staff place on job-embedded professional development, instructional monitoring, data collection and analysis, and meaningful and frequent professional collaboration, creates compelling evidence of the system's belief in and capacity for continuous improvement and the strong commitment to increasing measures of teaching and learning. Continuing to focus those processes to identify and meet the needs of individual learners will result in the sustainable gains in measures of student achievement that all stakeholders articulated a sincere commitment to produce.

The system has a genuine responsibility toward developing an effective school community. Building on the system's commitment to engage in an effective continuous improvement process, to ensure effective procedures for resource management and allocation strategies, and to provide professional opportunities to build capacity for quality instruction, a focus on increased academic growth and improved student achievement to meet learning needs for all students in all subgroups will enhance a culture of challenge, support and success for all learners in the system's continuous improvement journey.

Next Steps

Upon receiving the Accreditation Engagement Review Report the institution is encouraged to implement the following steps:
- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Develop plans to address the Priorities for Improvement identified by the Engagement Review Team.
- Use the findings and data from the report to guide and strengthen the institution's continuous improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report
- Continue the improvement journey

Team Roster

The Engagement Review Teams are comprised of professionals with varied backgrounds and professional experiences. All Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members complete AdvancED training and eleot certification to provide knowledge and understanding of the AdvancED tools and processes. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Bill Craig, Lead Evaluator	Bill Craig recently completed a career in several public school districts in and around Richmond, Virginia. His positions included classroom teacher, instructional specialist, elementary school principal, and assistant superintendent. Bill is a contractor with the Virginia Department of Education Office of School Improvement and an on-site supervisor for Liberty University student teachers. He served AdvancED as a Lead Evaluator, Associate Lead Evaluator, and team member for early learning, school and system accreditation. Bill is a graduate of The College of William and Mary and holds a master's degree from Virginia Commonwealth University and an educational specialist degree from William and Mary.
Cristian Brock	Christian Brock has 17 years of experience in public education in Georgia. She taught kindergarten through fifth grade and worked as academic coach for grades kindergarten through twelve. She is currently employed as Assistant Principal at Trion Elementary School in Georgia. Christian earned a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Shorter College, a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Lesley University, and a specialist degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Lincoln Memorial University.
Denise Finley	Denise Finley currently serves as a K-8 Curriculum/Learning Support Specialist and MTSS/RTI coordinator for Lamar County Schools. Mrs. Finley holds a dual Specialist degree (Educational Leadership/Reading-Family Literacy) from Georgia College and State University. She has 31 years of experience as an educator working in a variety of public settings with diverse student populations from birth through high school. Mrs. Finley served in a number of roles as classroom teacher, instructional coach, professional learning consultant and educational curriculum consultant. Her responsibilities and expertise include systems' change efforts, curriculum and instruction, design and evaluation of professional development, coordinating MTSS/RTI process, and early childhood and K-12 literacy. She has presented at numerous education conferences including GLISI, Reading First, SSTAGE, Georgia Reading Consortium, and Griffin RESA. Mrs. Finley serves as a board member for Gordon State College School of Education and was a guest instructor for the Early Childhood program. Denise is an active member of the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy of Lamar County, SSTAGE, and GACIS. She is the past president of Delta Kappa Gamma, Upsilon - Lamar County Chapter.

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Gail Greenway	Gail Greenway is completing her 28th year as an educator. Dr. Greenway began her career as a middle grade educator after receiving a BSED in Middle Grade Education from Georgia Southern University. She was a teacher leader, which eventually led to her to a position serving as the School Improvement Specialist. After Dr. Greenway received her leadership certification, she became an AP and Principal of Swainsboro Middle School. After five years as principal, Dr. Greenway left the school setting to take her current position as Federal Programs Director for Emanuel County Schools. During Dr. Greenway's time in the classroom and administration, she continued graduate work to receive a MED and EDS in Middle Grades Education, Leadership Certification, and an EdD in Educational Leadership. Dr. Greenway feels that working with AdvancED offers her a great professional learning experience to improve her own work as well as using her experience to help other districts with their continuous improvement.
Dr. Merlina McCullough	Dr. Merlina McCullough, a recently retired K-12 Literacy Specialist from the Arkansas Department of Education, received her doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from Arkansas State University. Her doctoral thesis was on the impact of National Board Certification, Advanced Degree, and Socio-Economic Status (SES) on the Literacy Achievement rate of 11th grade students in Arkansas. Her professional experiences include being a classroom teacher, district Literacy Specialist, secondary Curriculum Director, Junior High Assistant Principal, ESL Coordinator, Mentor Coordinator, and Consultant/Field Specialist for AdvancED. In 2011, she successfully renewed her National Board Certification. She is a self-described data geek, tech gadget lover, history buff, fishing enthusiast, avid reader, world traveler, and a former book reviewer. Retired since 2016, she keeps busy serving on the Board of Directors for THEA Foundation (for Arts education) and CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocate) to help abused or neglected children. She has served as an AdvancED Lead Evaluator (LE), Associate Lead Evaluator (ALE) and Team Member™ in several teams in the U.S., Asia, Middle East, and beyond.
Ceceilia Wiar	Mrs. Cecelia Wiar earned a BA in Education and MAT in Reading from Oakland University, an EdS in Elementary School Administration from Michigan State University and completed all doctoral level coursework in Organizational Development at Wayne State University. In the Michigan Public School systems she served as a teacher, an Elementary School Principal, a Junior High Assistant Principal and District Director of Title I and English as a Second Language programs. For ten years, she was the principal of an elementary school that included a county program for pre-school age Physically or Otherwise Health Impaired (POHI) students. After retirement in 2004, she participated in Michigan's MIExcel Project to assist low performing schools in the use of data and research-based instructional strategies to increase student academic proficiency and school success from 2006-2016. She received extensive training in coaching, using data for instructional decision-making, and establishing and strengthening professional learning communities. She provided consulting and technical support to schools using federal and state grants for supplemental services to target the specific needs of school populations. Since 2012, Mrs. Wiar has been a member of twenty-six AdvancED accreditation review teams, serving as the Lead Evaluator during 12 of those reviews.

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AdvancED combines the knowledge and expertise of a research institute, the skills of a management

consulting firm and the passion of a grassroots movement for educational change to empower

Pre-K-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.