



## **External Review**

# Greenwood County School District #51

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## **Introduction to the External Review Process**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Part I: Findings**

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

### **Accreditation Standards and Indicators**

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

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of robust standards that ensure excellence and continuous improvement. The standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

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

### **Standard 1: Purpose and Direction**

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

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

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.			3.0
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level

Standard	Standard Performance Level
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1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Interviews</li><li>•District purpose statements - past and present</li><li>•Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders</li><li>•Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook)</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li></ul>	3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement</li><li>•Examples of written stakeholder communications or marketing materials that portray the school purpose and direction</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Interviews</li></ul>	3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•The district strategic plan</li></ul>	3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Examples of schools continuous improvement plans</li><li>•The district data profile</li><li>•The district strategic plan</li></ul>	3

## Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

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

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has leaders who are advocates for the institution's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The institution's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.		2.83	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•District operations manuals</li> </ul>	3

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2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Proof of legal counsel</li><li>•Assurances, certifications</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest</li><li>•Governing code of ethics</li></ul>	3
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-today operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Roles and responsibilities of school leadership</li><li>•Roles and responsibilities of district leadership</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Survey results regarding functions of the governing authority and operations of the district</li><li>•Stakeholder input and feedback</li><li>•Agendas and minutes of meetings</li></ul>	3
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Examples of collaboration and shared leadership</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li></ul>	3

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2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Survey responses</li> <li>•Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan</li> <li>•Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan</li> </ul>	3
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation</li> </ul>	2

**Powerful Practices**

**Indicator**

1. The excellent relationship and trust between the governing body and the Superintendent support practices that ensure the effective administration of the system and its schools.

2.3

External Review (ER) team interviews with the Superintendent, board members, administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders affirmed an extremely positive and trusting superintendent-board relationship as well as a commitment to continuous improvement. The Superintendent and governing body understand and respect their respective roles and responsibilities which has contributed to a clear governance structure that supports the effective administration of the system and its schools. The dynamic of effective, supportive leadership provides critical stability and guidance for continuous improvement efforts within a school system.

**Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning**

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

provide experiences, resources, and time for educators to engage in meaningful professional learning that promotes student learning and educator quality.

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Standard			Standard Performance Level
The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.			2.92
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Course or program descriptions</li> <li>•Lesson plans</li> <li>•Observations</li> <li>•Enrollment patterns for various courses and programs</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> </ul>	3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Curriculum guides</li> <li>•A description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Common assessments</li> <li>•Standards-based report cards</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Program descriptions</li> </ul>	3

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3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource</li><li>•Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool</li><li>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Interdisciplinary projects</li></ul>	3
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Curriculum maps</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Documentation of collection of lesson plans, grade books, or other data record systems</li><li>•Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices</li><li>•Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success</li></ul>	3

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3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Common language, protocols and reporting tools</li><li>•Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees</li><li>•Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings</li><li>•Professional development funding to promote professional learning communities</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning</li><li>•Examples of cross curricular or program projects, interdisciplinary instruction, and classroom action research projects</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li></ul>	3
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Observations</li><li>•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li></ul>	2
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff</li><li>•Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices</li></ul>	3

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<p>3.8</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Performance-based report cards</li> <li>•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li> <li>•Volunteer program with variety of options for participation</li> <li>•List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress</li> <li>•Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process</li> <li>•Interviews</li> </ul>	<p>4</p>
<p>3.9</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Description of formalized structures for adults to advocate on behalf of students</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•List of students matched to adults who advocate on their behalf</li> <li>•Master schedule with time for formalized structure</li> </ul>	<p>3</p>
<p>3.10</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting</li> </ul>	<p>3</p>

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3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Evaluation tools for professional learning</li> <li>•District quality control procedures showing implementation plan for professional development for district and school staff</li> <li>•District professional development plan involving the district and all schools</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Interviews</li> </ul>	3
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•List of learning support services and student population served by such services</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Observations</li> <li>•Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning</li> <li>•Data used to identify unique learning needs of students</li> </ul>	2

**Powerful Practices**

**Indicator**

1. The implementation of curriculum mapping, common unit development, and common assessments at the primary and elementary levels contribute to positive student achievement and provide students with multiple opportunities to achieve the system's vision of learning, leading, and serving.

3.1

In the primary grades (K-2), strong efforts to build a comprehensive literacy model with universal screenings, progress monitoring tools, and guided reading instruction are evident. In grades 3-6 (which includes the primary and elementary school), integrated units of instruction closely aligned to standards are implemented with fidelity to increase student mastery of content in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and social studies. Trend data in these grades indicate that students consistently out-perform the state and similar districts over time. Additionally, teachers in these grades use a collaborative process to develop, implement, and evaluate the results of the curriculum. Strong building leadership is focused on results and encourages teachers in a collaborative process. The system has provided staff development on curriculum mapping and has begun to implement powerful protocols for examining student work. These practices abound at the early grades and are emerging at the junior high and high school levels through Biobridge vertical teams. Research supports teachers working in collaborative teams at all levels and across all subjects to develop curriculum and evaluate student work as a "best practice." The system is encouraged to build upon this strength as it transitions to Common Core standards and Smarter Balanced assessments.

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| 2. The system has developed a strong communication infrastructure at all levels to engage families in meaningful ways with their children's learning and has developed a culture of positive personal relationships over time. | 3.8 |
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The system routinely communicates student progress with parents through a variety of measures such as weekly folders and agendas, goal setting student conferences, parent teacher conferences, a parent portal on the system website, family math and science nights, parent workshops, individual graduation planning conferences, personal teacher communications, and invitations to tutoring opportunities before, during, and after school. The district designs, communicates, and evaluates opportunities for parents to seek additional assistance for their children as needed. Through the interview process, the team learned that parent satisfaction with their child's progress throughout the system is very high. System staff reported to the team that feedback on state parent climate surveys and AdvancED parent surveys is used to evaluate the system's effectiveness in meeting the needs of parents. Family engagement through effective communication increases opportunities for the district's values and beliefs in teaching and learning to resonate with a larger stakeholder community.

***Opportunities for Improvement***

***Indicator***

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| 1. Provide for the continued development of systematic routines and protocols for professional learning communities at the system and school levels. | 3.5 |
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The system is emerging in its training and implementation of professional learning communities, which is a powerful tool to guide system and school improvement of student learning. The administrative team (A Team) model provides a strong infrastructure to build the capacity of system and building level leaders to analyze relevant data, develop common goals, and share strategies for addressing the unique learning needs at the individual building level. Schools at all levels of the system have made a strong effort to create data rooms or data notebooks to analyze the available summative data provided by the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS), the High School Assessment Program (HSAP), and End of Course assessments. Fidelity of implementation of the professional learning community model (in whatever name building leaders call it) will assist the system in analyzing and developing appropriate curriculum to address the Common Core standards and increase the system's use of formative data such as Measures of Academic Performance (MAP), common assessments, and other short-term progress monitoring assessments to strategically address student learning needs. Implementation of this opportunity for improvement will drive instructional conversations about student performance, guide intervention opportunities, increase vertical alignment of skills and knowledge across grade levels, and develop instructional units and curriculum maps that are aligned with Common Core state standards. Systematic and focused collaboration among teachers and administrators encourages a shared sense of ownership in the overall success of the organization and provides an effective structure for enhancing strategies which support improved learning opportunities for students.

***Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems***

Institutions, regardless of their size, need access to sufficient resources and systems of support to be able to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts that result in a continuous improvement cycle. Indeed, a study conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Pan, 2003)

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"demonstrated a strong relationship between resources and student success...both the level of resources and their explicit allocation seem to affect educational outcomes."

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

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.		2.88	
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•District budgets or financial plans for the last three years</li> <li>•Observations</li> <li>•District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Assessments of staffing needs</li> <li>•Documentation of highly qualified staff</li> <li>•Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools</li> </ul>	3

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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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Observations</li><li>•Examples of school schedules</li><li>•District quality assurance procedures showing district oversight of schools pertaining to school resources</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Examples of school calendars</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction</li><li>•Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction</li><li>•District strategic plan showing resources support for district</li></ul>	3
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Example systems for school maintenance requests</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements</li><li>•Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments</li><li>•School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes</li></ul>	3

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4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems</li> <li>•District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities, learning environments</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Observations</li></ul>	3
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Observations</li> <li>•Evaluation procedures and results of education resources</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•District education delivery model intended for school implementation including media and information resources to support the education program</li> <li>•Data on media and information resources available to students and staff</li></ul>	3

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<p>4.6</p>	<p>The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model</li> <li>•Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level</li> <li>•District quality control procedures that monitor the effectiveness of technology services at the districtlevel and school-level</li> <li>•Assessments to inform development of district and school technology plans</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness</li> <li>•Observations</li> </ul>	<p>2</p>
<p>4.7</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Observations</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Student assessment system for identifying student needs</li> <li>•Agreements with school community agencies for studentfamily support</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education</li> <li>•List of support services available to students</li> </ul>	<p>3</p>

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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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning</li><li>•Description of IEP process</li><li>•District quality assurance procedures that monitor program effectiveness of student support services</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Description of referral process</li></ul>	3
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### ***Opportunities for Improvement***

### ***Indicator***

1. Improve the technology infrastructure and update equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.

4.6

The system has the beginnings of a technology infrastructure that has the capability to provide the district's students with enhanced instructional opportunity. The ER team found little evidence to support student learning through the utilization of digital learning devices in regards to twenty-first century technologies. Although computer labs are available and SmartBoards have been installed in classrooms throughout the system, more updated digital devices are needed in order to meet the learning needs of students. The team's assessment of the district's technologies through observations, interviews, the Technology Plan, and technology lists indicated that the system should increase the use of digital tools and up-to-date technologies to better assist students in gathering information, conducting research, solving problems, communicating information, and working collaboratively. Additionally, the team recommends expanded training in the use of existing and emerging technologies and increased technical support to better meet the needs of the teaching and learning process. A comprehensive, fully functioning, reliable technology infrastructure is critical to adequately support the system's teaching and learning process.

### ***Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement***

Systems with strong improvement processes are moving beyond anxiety about the current reality and focusing on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, that is, data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, & Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembosky et al., 2005). The study also identified six key strategies that performance-driven systems use: (1) building a foundation for data-driven decision making; (2) establishing a culture of data use and continuous improvement; (3) investing in an

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information management system; (4) selecting the right data; (5) building school capacity for data-driven decision making; and (6) analyzing and acting on data to improve performance. Other research studies, though largely without comparison groups, suggested that data-driven decision making has the potential to increase student performance (Alwin, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Lafee, 2002; McIntire, 2002).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine strategies to improve student performance. The institution implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained, and the institution demonstrates progress in improving student performance and institution effectiveness.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The 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.		2.6	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness</li> <li>•Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free</li> <li>•Data Notebooks School Leadership Team Agendas Staff Focus Team Agendas School Improvement Team Agendas</li> </ul>	3

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<p>5.2</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•District quality control procedures that monitor schools in effectively using data to improve instruction and student learning</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Examples of changes to the district strategic plan based on data results</li> <li>•Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning</li> <li>•District Office Data Wall School Data Walls Posted Pretests in Local Schools Data Notebooks</li> </ul>	<p>2</p>
<p>5.3</p>	<p>Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data</li> <li>•Documentation of attendance and training related to data use</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Professional Development Plan Induction Agenda Teacher Evaluations of Professional Learning Mentor Teachers</li> </ul>	<p>2</p>

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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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Student surveys</li><li>•Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data</li><li>•Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning</li><li>•Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans</li><li>•Evidence of student growth</li><li>•Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS)</li><li>End of Course Assessments</li><li>SAT Scores</li><li>ACT Scores</li><li>Odysseyware Results</li><li>Graduation Surveys</li><li>Summative Compass learning Scores</li></ul>	3
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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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District quality control procedures for monitoring district effectiveness</li> <li>•Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals</li> <li>•District quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, systems that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals</li> <li>•Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement</li> <li>•Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Enrich System PowerSchool Excent Administrative team Agendas Focus Team Agendas School Improvement Team Agendas</li> </ul>	3
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**Powerful Practices**

1. The monthly administrative team (A Team) meetings provide system and school-based personnel with the opportunity to collaboratively disaggregate data and conduct and communicate in-depth analyses of student performance.

**Indicator**

5.5

The system's administrative team (A Team) meetings provide a forum for data to be examined both horizontally and vertically. School administrators and central office staff address real and meaningful data regarding student performance, affording them the opportunity for creative problem solving. The A Team is a catalyst for information to flow upward to the governing body and pervasively throughout the system to all stakeholders while seeking the best strategies to improve professional practice which enhance student learning. The provision of focused direction and effective modeling by administrators and staff promotes clear alignment with strategic goals and enhances performance results.

**Opportunities for Improvement**

1. Provide additional training for professional and support staff to further expand

**Indicator**

5.3

proficiency in the analysis, interpretation, and use of assessment data.

Through interviews with system staff and school administrators and a review of artifacts, the team learned that professional learning had been provided to staff members in the analysis, interpretation, and use of assessment data. However, based on interviews and observations, the team recommends more in-depth training as quickly as local resources will allow. Additional professional development in the area of data analysis will better support existing initiatives and performance excellence by improving the skills of the professional staff. Adequate training in processes for collecting and utilizing performance data will help to provide a consistent and unified focus in support of the learning needs of the system's students and is critical to successful continuous improvement efforts.

## 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 wellmanaged. An environment where high expectations are the norm and active learning takes place. It measures whether learners' progress is monitored and feedback is provided and the extent to which technology is leveraged for learning.

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. External review team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a 4 point scale with 4=very evident, 3=evident, 2=somewhat evident, and 1=not observed. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the 7 learning environments included in ELEOT.

### Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT)

<b><i>Environments</i></b>	<b><i>Level</i></b>
A. Equitable Learning Environment:	2.45
B. High Expectations Environment:	2.32
C. Supportive Learning Environment:	2.9
D. Active Learning Environment:	2.72
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment:	2.61
F. Well-Managed Learning Environment:	3.13
G. Digital Learning Environment	1.79

## Part II: Conclusion

### Summary of the External Review

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

The Greenwood County School District #51, also known as Ware Shoals 51, External Review spanned a four day period, beginning on Sunday, April 21, 2013 and culminating on Wednesday, April 24, 2013.

The first work session included a general discussion by all team members as to what was learned about known artifacts and the system prior to arriving for the visit, as well and a review of the system's rating of

standard indicators. Using the AdvancED Standard Workbooks, each team member reviewed all indicators associated with his/her standard assignment and explained why each component and overall indicator was rated as presented. During this process each team member recorded the information in their workbooks and identified key questions to be asked and key artifacts to be perused during the review. Each team member offered a potential powerful practice and a potential opportunity for improvement relative to his/her standard indicators.

The team spent Monday receiving information from overviews and interviews with system administrators. Team members also interviewed four of five board members and all three system principals. Additional information was gathered from system administrators and artifacts regarding several indicator requirements. Monday evening work session activities included a second round of indicator ratings conducted by the team as a whole and identification of additional potential powerful practices, opportunities for improvement, and required actions.

On Tuesday, the team visited all three of the system's schools conducting interviews and completing thirty classroom observations using the ELEOT tool. Tuesday evening work session activities included entering all ELEOT ratings into the on-line diagnostic, a third round of indicator ratings, and reaching consensus on the identified required actions, powerful practices, and opportunities for improvement.

The team continued its deliberation on Wednesday morning, re-affirmed its earlier decisions, and finalized the Exit Report. The External Review concluded with the presentation of the Oral Exit Report at a meeting of the Board of Trustees during the afternoon.

The system was well prepared for the review and those interviewed were candid and forthcoming in their conversations and presentations. Additionally, the team agreed that system personnel conducted an honest assessment of how they perceived the system and schools were meeting the required AdvancED indicators and standards. A total of 94 stakeholders including 4 board members, 8 administrators, 31 teachers, 3 community members, 14 parents, and 34 students were interviewed by the ER team during the external review process.

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

The External Review team identified four powerful practices that became evident during the external review process. They, together with three identified opportunities for improvement and three required actions, support the rating of specific standard indicators as well as general themes that became evident to the team. The system's general themes as perceived by the ER team are as follows:

The Greenwood County School District #51 (Ware Shoals 51) motto of learning, serving, and leading, which briefly summarizes its vision statement, is integrated into communication efforts, system activities, and serves to effectively unite all stakeholders. The small size of the system and its community has served to create a sense of "family" among all stakeholders that generates strong support for all three of its schools. The ER team found evidence supporting an excellent relationship between the Superintendent and the governing board (Board of Trustees) characterized by trust, good communication (weekly updates), and a mutual respect for individual role responsibilities. In interviews, board members

had high praise for the work, leadership, and vision of the Superintendent. During her overview, the Superintendent characterized her solid relationship with the board by stating, "I have the best board in the state of South Carolina." From interviews with board members, administrators, teachers, and parents, the team learned that many strategic decisions by system leadership addressing difficult budget realities have been accomplished so as to minimize the potential negative impact on staff morale, parental support, and student achievement. Examples of such was the use of fund balance to avoid teacher furloughs as well as supporting scheduled teacher pay raises. Through interviews with administrators and teachers, the team discovered that informal observations were not systematic in all schools and there was little or no evidence of a supportive, documented process with clearly defined expectations regarding informal observations and related feedback to improve instructional practice.

The system is focused on high expectations for student learning and is in the process of transitioning to the state Common Core standards. Much work has recently been accomplished relative to the development and deployment of curriculum mapping, common unit development, and common assessment instruments through strong leadership at the primary and elementary levels. The system's emphasis at this level has produced trend data which indicate that students in these grades consistently out-perform the state and similar districts. This work needs to continue with a focus on the emerging efforts in grades 7-12 as well as the overall continued conversion to the Common Core at all grade levels. Through the interview process, the team found that the system is emerging with its focus on developing professional learning communities (PLCs) within its schools. Training has been provided, routines have been initiated, and data rooms or data notebooks have been established which support analysis of summative data provided through state assessments. The system's A Team model provides a strong infrastructure which provides critical information in support of the PLC process. The team recommends that the system continue to refine the PLC protocol at all levels for the continuing analysis of formative and summative assessment data in order to address student learning needs, and the development of appropriate curriculum to address the continuing conversion to Common Core standards.

From interviews with administrators and teachers as well as a review of existing formative measures (Measures of Academic Performance, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, and Dominion), the team recognized the need for additional, more frequent, locally developed, formative assessments of student progress which would provide timely feedback to more effectively drive re-teaching and intervention efforts. Existing efforts provide little on-going analysis to inform the teaching and learning process. In her interview with the team, the Superintendent expressed a desire to move toward Smarter Balanced assessments (when they are released) which address the depth and breadth of Common Core standards, and realistically stated that the system is "using a band aid for now." Additionally, the team observed that the district has an emerging Response to Intervention (RtI) model in the early grades and encourages the expansion of RtI to provide a comprehensive structure which supports intervention strategies K-12. More timely assessment of student learning and a comprehensive approach to interventions will enable the district to better achieve performance excellence.

As a result of interviews with administrators, teachers, board members, parents, and students, as well as a review of artifacts, the team found significant evidence to support recognizing Ware Shoals 51 for its strong communication infrastructure. Internal and external stakeholders are kept well-informed and involved through the district website, weekly newsletters and updates, the strategic planning process, an Annual Report, PowerSchool parent portal, community meetings, weekly folders, goal setting

conferences, parent/teacher conferences, family math and science nights, school councils, personal parent/teacher communication, tutoring opportunities, PTO meetings, and movie nights. Additionally, the system evaluates its communication infrastructure and monitors stakeholder satisfaction through feedback from the state climate survey and the AdvancED parent survey. A high level of parent satisfaction with stakeholder communication and involvement efforts of the system and its schools was quite evident to the team.

During the standards interview, the team was informed that the number of system students identified for special education services was "extremely high (17%) and was linked to a need for improved intervention at the elementary level." After interviews with other system leaders and a review of demographic data, the team concurred with this observation. The percentage exceeds state and national averages and is an obvious area in need of improvement if possible. The system should closely examine its practices and protocols for identifying special needs students. Such a protocol should include a well-defined, comprehensive, and multi-tiered approach to intervention (Rtl process) to determine if a student truly requires special education services to meet his/her learning needs. Such a comprehensive intervention model would also prove beneficial in identifying appropriate support for English as a second language (ESL) students in their quest for success.

Ware Shoals 51 has developed and implemented a Technology Plan which is updated every three years. The plan has provided guidance for the beginning of an infrastructure that supports teaching and learning as well as other operational needs of the system. The team noted computer labs, SmartBoards, and the Destiny media resource throughout all three of the system's schools as well as provision for wireless communication, however, the wireless infrastructure was not reliable enough for the team to conduct online classroom observations. Additionally, there was little evidence to support student learning utilizing updated digital devices more related to twenty-first century technologies. The team recommends improving the wireless capability as well as the acquisition and use of more up-to-date technologies (hand held devices, blended learning, digital portfolios, open educational resources) as a means to increase student engagement, motivation, and accelerate learning. Staff should be given additional training in the application of currently available and promising new technologies to better support students with their ability to gather information, conduct research, solve problems, communicate information, and work collaboratively.

Ware Shoals 51 is keenly aware of the need to collect, analyze, and evaluate data in order to make critical decisions in support of the teaching and learning process. Through interviews with system staff and school administrators and a review of artifacts, it was evident to the team that the system has been engaged with initial training for staff in the analysis, interpretation, and use of assessment data. As a result of interviews and observations, it was also evident to the team that there is a need for more indepth training in this area. The team recommends additional, focused professional development in the area of data analysis in order to better support existing efforts as well as the implementation of additional formative assessments as previously mentioned.

In her interview with the team, the Superintendent emphasized that "leadership ensures accountability" within the Ware Shoals system and that the system has created and implemented administrative team (A Team) meetings as a means to embrace this accountability for continuous improvement. Members of the A Team include the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, the Director of Support Services, the

Director of Special Services, the Director of Technology, maintenance supervisor, and all three principals. From interviews and a review of artifacts, the team learned that accountability processes monitored during these monthly meetings include results of audits and surveys, policy reviews and revisions, procedures for the collection and analysis of performance data, updates to the district's Strategic Plan and individual School Renewal Plans, professional development survey results, student performance results on statewide assessments, district accountability on state and federal measures, and stakeholder survey data. Information from these meetings is shared with school staffs and the governing board and used to improve processes both at the central office and school level.

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 Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) was used by ER team members to gather data on seven "environments" found within the school classroom. The tool, with its 30 descriptors, assists in identifying observable evidence of classroom environments that are conducive to student learning. Ratings for the environments range from "1 to 4", a 1 indicating that the practice or descriptor was Not Observed, and 4 indicating that the practice or descriptor was Very Evident. The results of these observations were used by the ER team to corroborate information obtained from interviews, artifacts, and student performance data. During the Day 2 school reviews, team members, using ELEOT, conducted observations in 30 different classrooms within the system's 3 schools. The following ratings and brief associated generalizations are provided based on those observations.

Equitable Learning Environment yielded a rating of 2.45.

Classroom rules were clearly understood and followed by all students observed. Students had equal access to classroom activities, discussions, support, and resources in all classrooms visited. These two practices earned the highest team ratings within this environment. Team members recorded that differentiated learning opportunities to meet individual needs were observed in 17 out of 30 classrooms visited. The practice which was most frequently "Not Observed" (21 out of 30) by team members within this environment was students having opportunities to learn about their own as well as the backgrounds, cultures, and differences of others.

High Expectations Environment yielded a rating of 2.32.

Students were actively striving to meet the expectations of the teacher in most classes observed. Rigor and the use of higher order thinking skills varied from classroom to classroom but were most observable at the elementary school. The practice which was most frequently "Not Observed" (25 out of 30) by team members within this environment was that of being provided with exemplars of high quality work.

Supportive Learning Environment yielded a rating of 2.90.

This environment was strongest at the primary and elementary school levels. Students had a very positive attitude about their learning experiences and classroom dynamics in general. The practice which earned the highest rating within this environment was being provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks. The practice which was most frequently "Not Observed" (8 out of 30) by team members within this environment was being provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for his/her needs.

Active learning Environment yielded a rating of 2.72.

A high level of positive, active student engagement in discussions as well as in other learning activities was observable in most classrooms visited. These two practices earned the highest team ratings for this environment. The practice which was most frequently "Not Observed" (10 out of 30) by team members within this environment was students making connections from content to real-life experiences.

Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment yielded a rating of 2.61.

Students appeared to understand the content of the lesson being presented and responded often to teacher feedback when given to improve their understanding. Understanding lesson content earned the highest team ratings for this environment. The practice which was most frequently "Not Observed" (14 out of 30) by team members within this environment was students understanding how their work is assessed.

Well-Managed Learning Environment yielded a rating of 3.13.

Well-managed classrooms were a particular strength of all schools visited as evidenced by this environment receiving the highest overall ELEOT score from the team. Students were very respectful to the teacher and each other, followed rules, and understood the class routine. These three practices earned the highest team ratings within this environment. When transitions occurred, they were quite efficient and orderly. The practice which was most frequently "Not Observed" (9 out of 30) by team members within this environment was student collaborations during learning activities.

Digital Learning Environment yielded a rating of 1.79.

Students were observed in several classrooms using technology to gather information to support learning objectives, although this environment received the lowest overall ELEOT score from the team. This first practice earned the highest team rating within this environment. The practice which was most frequently "Not Observed" (22 out of 30) by team members within this environment was students using technology to conduct research and/or create original works for learning.

On behalf of the External Review team, I offer our thanks for the opportunity to conduct this external review in such a quality school system. The leadership and staff at all levels were extremely helpful through participating in overviews, interviews, and providing artifacts critical to the process. Their enthusiasm, expertise, professionalism, dedication, and high performance expectations contributed greatly to the overall external review experience. Additionally, classroom teachers and students were most welcoming during the team on-site observations.

The team extends a very special "thank you" to the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, and all those responsible for contributing to the development of the system's Accreditation Report. Finally, we appreciate the gracious hospitality and attention to needs that was extended to us during the review by all system personnel and many members of the Ware Shoals community.

The Greenwood County School District #51 External Review team recommends that the system be granted a new five year term of accreditation by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission. The system is advised to begin work on the Required Actions immediately so that significant progress on these can be reported in the Accreditation Progress Report in two years.

## Required Actions

1. Develop and deploy additional formative assessments and Response to Intervention (Rtl) strategies across the system to guide both students and teachers toward expected learning outcomes and higher standards of performance.

Primary Indicator or Assurance: 3.6

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and Dominie are the primary assessments used by the system to inform the instruction of students. K-2 teachers utilize these data routinely to inform the reading instructional decisions and strategies they utilize with students. A strong literacy Response to Intervention (Rtl) model is developing in the early grades. Teachers in grades 3-10 utilize MAP primarily to gain initial insights into student needs, develop grouping strategies, and predict student performance on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) and the High School Assessment Program (HSAP). More frequent common formative assessments, developed by teacher teams, would strengthen the immediate information teachers have about student knowledge and skills, provide data for timely and constructive feedback to students on how to improve, and drive re-teaching and intervention efforts, especially in grades 7-10 where these practices are emerging. Student achievement increases when teachers routinely assess student attainment of knowledge and skills and develop the instructional steps to address their needs. The system is strongly encouraged to continue with its plans to extend comprehensive Rtl strategies in mathematics in the primary grades and to all subjects in grades 3-8. A systematic and comprehensive structure for on-going formative assessment and timely intervention will better inform instructional practice and positively impact performance results.

2. Examine practices and protocols for identifying and serving special populations of students including special needs and English as a Second Language (ESL) students to ensure that a comprehensive system of interventions is implemented and evaluated through a collaborative process prior to identifying a need for special education.

Primary Indicator or Assurance: 3.12

Interviews with system leaders and a review of demographic data indicated that 17% of the system's population is currently identified for special education services. While it may be possible that such a high percentage truly reflects the number of students with a disability, the system should examine the second prong of the identification process to accurately determine if the student requires special education services to meet his/her learning needs. The system has an emerging Response to Intervention program which

should provide a venue to meet student learning needs through a tiered model of small group and individual instruction. This model should be implemented in all schools with fidelity and carefully evaluated to determine its effectiveness prior to recommending special education services. An effective, comprehensive system for planned intervention and support will greatly enhance the district's ability to accurately address the unique learning needs of its student population.

3. Increase instructional monitoring and analyze results of findings to improve professional practices and student learning,

Primary Indicator or Assurance: 2.6

System policy supports the formal and informal evaluation of staff. Through interviews with administrators and teachers the team found that informal observations were not performed systematically in all schools using a documented process with clearly defined expectations. Such a process should include specific observable behaviors, frequency expectations, as well as a timely feedback component for the improvement of professional practice as needed. Staff should monitor the process for systemic fidelity and results. Frequent monitoring of professional practice and resulting feedback can have a very positive impact on curriculum delivery and student achievement.

## **Part III: Addenda**

### ***Next Steps***

The institution should:

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

### ***Celebrating Accreditation***

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

## ***About AdvancED***

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

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