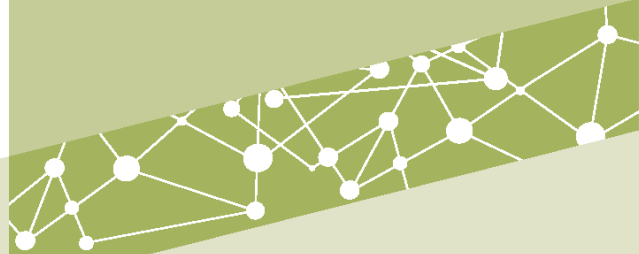


March 10 - 13, 2019



AdvancED® Engagement Review Report



AdvancED® Performance Accreditation

» **Results for:**
Walton County School District
200 Double Springs Church Road
Monroe, GA 30656

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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.	Meets 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.	Meets 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.	Exceeds Expectations
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.	Meets Expectations
1.7	Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.	Emerging
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the system's purpose and direction.	Meets Expectations
1.9	The system provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.	Meets Expectations
1.10	Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.	Meets Expectations
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.	Meets Expectations
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.	Exceeds 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.	Exceeds Expectations
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.	Meets Expectations
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.	Needs Improvement

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 institution plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the institution's effectiveness.	Meets Expectations
3.2	The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.	Meets Expectations
3.3	The institution 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 institution attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the institution's purpose and direction	Exceeds Expectations
3.5	The institution integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.	Emerging
3.6	The institution provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the institution.	Meets Expectations
3.7	The institution demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the institution's purpose and direction.	Exceeds Expectations
3.8	The institution allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the institution's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.	Meets 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® Observations		
Total Number of eleot® Observations from the Engagement Review	42	
Environments	Rating	AIN
Equitable Learning Environment	2.45	2.86
Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs	1.60	1.89
Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	3.24	3.74
Learners are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner	3.38	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	1.57	2.06
High Expectations Environment	2.37	3.02
Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher	2.50	3.17
Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	2.50	3.14
Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work	2.14	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)	2.36	3.06
Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning	2.36	2.89
Supportive Learning Environment	3.18	3.61
Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful	3.19	3.66

eleot® Observations		
Total Number of eleot® Observations from the Engagement Review	42	
Environments	Rating	AIN
Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	3.07	3.49
Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks	3.05	3.66
Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher	3.43	3.66
Active Learning Environment	2.39	3.08
Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and the teacher predominate	2.57	3.34
Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences	2.24	2.80
Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities	2.74	3.43
Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments	2.00	2.74
Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	2.34	3.14
Learners monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored	2.21	3.20
Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work	2.57	3.37
Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content	2.62	3.37
Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed	1.95	2.63
Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.29	3.58
Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other	3.43	3.86
Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others	3.36	3.83
Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another	3.10	3.09
Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions	3.26	3.54
Digital Learning Environment	1.42	1.50
Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	1.60	1.60
Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	1.38	1.46
Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and/or work collaboratively for learning	1.29	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, 2.12
Improve Opportunities for Improvement	Standards: 1.7, 1.11 Standard: 3.5
Impact Effective Practices	Standards: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10 Standards: 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11 Standards: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8

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

AdvancED will review the results of the Accreditation Engagement Review to make a final determination concerning accreditation status, including the appropriate next steps for your 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	319.68	AIN 5 Year IEQ Range	278.34 – 283.33
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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.

The Engagement Review Team for the Walton County School District identified several themes that support the system's continuous improvement processes. These themes include both strengths and opportunities to guide the district's future improvement journey.

The school system supports continuous improvement with school board members who embody a cohesive group of dedicated patrons who truly care about "what is best for students" by adhering to a code of conduct that separates their roles and responsibilities from the autonomy of leaders to carry out the day-to-day operations of the system. It was reported in interviews with board members and district level administrators that written policies are consistently reviewed at board meetings. Policies are created and revised as new information is received from the state legislature. In addition, the board has created an effective procedure of holding work sessions for board members one week prior to official board meetings to ensure elected members have enough information to vote on recommendations at their next board meeting. The Walton County Board of Education (BOE) responsibly manages community resources with the assistance of the Board Finance Subcommittee. The superintendent, cabinet members, and system department leaders built a zero-based budget system targeting human, fiscal, and material resources in a "needs based" philosophy to achieve equity and support for all classrooms in the fifteen schools. Details of the budget building process were shared in the superintendent's overview presentation. In addition to the 18 hours of training for new board members and the 12 hours of training for current board members in regional and state meetings, the district provides a local orientation for onboarding new board members. The training protocols were shared in interviews with the superintendent, district office personnel, and board members. Walton County BOE has been recognized in three of the past four years as an exemplary school board by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA). According to an article in the *Walton Tribune* newspaper, "...less than 20 percent of school boards in Georgia receive this prestigious honor presented at the annual GSBA conference." According to interviews with school board members and feedback from teachers and administrators, individual school board members actively support the district-created and web-published Chain of Command when they get calls from their constituents. The Chain of Command was created in order to begin to solve problems at the classroom and school level where issues begin to arise in order to protect the integrity of individual school board members as they communicate with the public. At each board meeting, the superintendent reviews the policies related to the overarching goals of the district. The school board reviews written policies each month in order for all policies to be reviewed in a timely fashion.

The school district supports teaching and learning with a positive school climate which exemplifies the system's

belief that "...schools must be places where students feel safe, supported, valued and respected," resulting in a clear sense of pride among all stakeholders. In interviews, the superintendent explained that the district is building a culture of positive relationships and that "their talent is relationships." Similarly, in interviews, parents praised the personalized leadership at the district and school level. One parent explained that her child had a sense of safety because she was "...not lost in anonymity." Parents also complimented building administrators for knowing all students by name and checking on their children when they were sick. One parent shared that, after calling in sick for her child on a Friday, the teacher phoned the parent to "check on the child" on Saturday morning to show concern. There was a triangulation of data among the responses of parents, teachers, and students from on the AdvancED Climate and Culture surveys. Staff reported that their colleagues are "supportive" (100%), "respectful" (87%), and "helpful" (65%). Parents reported, in their survey, that their interactions with staff at their child's school were "respectful" (66%), "supportive" (63%), and "helpful" (61%) when selecting from 13 descriptors in the survey. Student interviews revealed that teachers are "encouraging, warm, and like family." All of this feedback points to a positive climate in the schools which permeates the culture throughout the district. In interviews, all teachers expressed appreciation for the support shown by their building administrators as well as the responsiveness from district office personnel. Confirming the strong positive culture is the fact that nine schools were recognized with a 5-Star School Climate Rating from the Georgia Department of Education. Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) implementation is evident in 13 out of 15 schools and has proven to boost positive culture as shared by both teachers and students in interviews. Student interviews revealed a sense of unity although there is wide diversity in the student population, both in ethnicity and in 981 languages spoken. The team noticed a unity theme depicted in "one heartbeat" as seen on student clothing and on signs around the school. Safe schools also support the secure culture in Walton County School District. Similarly, there are six school resource officers with one at each middle and high school. The school district installed secure and attractive vestibules in 14 out of 15 school buildings with the final vestibule to be completed during current renovations. Modern facilities in most schools reflect safe and secure learning environments. In school observations, staff displayed smiles and supportive greetings as students passed in hallways and common areas.

Not only is there a positive culture in the schools but the system has an outstanding ability to attract and retain qualified personnel. All staff members were observed to promote this positive climate in the schools, which was reported to lure and keep both students and staff members in the district and schools. According to the superintendent's presentation, 96% of employees express job satisfaction in a local survey, and the district has a 95% retention rate. AdvancED surveys confirmed the theme that teachers feel supported and happy. A principal shared during an interview that she has only had to hire one instructional position in the last two years. Similarly, she explained that leaders are grown from within as she currently has three teachers who want to become assistant principals and has had three assistant principals under her leadership who have become principals in the system. Many district personnel and teachers explained in interviews that they worked previously in surrounding counties and were attracted to the community atmosphere in Walton County. The superintendent explained that the district receives as many as 250 applicants per job opening. Outstanding facilities are a highlight in this district as the average age of the facilities in the system is 14 years according to the superintendent's overview. Loganville Elementary and Loganville Middle School share a state-of-the-art amphitheater. Loganville Elementary includes three playgrounds with turf surfaces and special needs accommodations. District personnel shared a competitive salary schedule that is top-ranked in the state for beginning teachers and it attracts qualified personnel. The district draws qualified personnel from surrounding counties due to the "...comprehensive and affordable benefits package for all eligible employees and their family members" as shared on the district website and through district employee interviews.

In support of organizational effectiveness, the system exemplifies responsible resource management, including

comprehensive long-range planning for facilities, detailed enrollment projections, and equitable use of funds to support programs and services. The schools benefit from a trusting and generous public who voted to pass the latest ELOST (Educational Local Option Sales Tax) funds to expand and improve facilities and support continual technology upgrades in classrooms. In 2018, several schools received interactive clear-touch liquid crystal display (LCD) panels in every classroom. All middle and high schools are 1:1 with Chromebooks, and Walton County is actively moving to implement a 1:1 device ratio in elementary schools. The district has a comprehensive long-range plan including upgrades to facilities such as Loganville High School and Bay Creek Elementary in the next two years. The district continues to anticipate growth and plans for additional staff in areas of need. For example, growth in the Bay Creek Elementary attendance area resulted in the addition of three full-time classroom teaching positions for the 2019-2020 school year. The district maintains a set of standard operating procedures for maintenance personnel and provides professional development for all classified staff. The Georgia Department of Education issued a 4-Star Financial Efficiency Rating to Walton County Schools in the 2018 CCRPI (College and Career Performance Readiness Index) reports.

Although the district has provided generous amounts of technology infused in classrooms in the last few years, they lack a robust 21st Century Technology Plan that integrates student use of devices for research, problem-solving, and/or creation of original works in a collaborative learning environment. In school observations, there was limited use of technology on the part of students using problem-solving, research, and collaborative learning. Technology was most often used by students to access programs such as Prodigy, MobyMax, READ 180, IXL, Test Prep, Brain Pop, and other online assessments and commercial programs, rather than students using technology to create original, real-world applications. In interviews, stakeholders discussed 1:1 availability of technology in the secondary schools. However, student use of technology for project-based learning and problem solving was not often observed. There were, however, pockets of excellence in some classrooms where students were using laptops to revise projects in Google Docs. Other classrooms were using Schoology and documents online to enhance images and narratives to support assignments. Classroom observations revealed most often the technology available was used by teachers in traditional delivery of lessons. It was reported that technology professional learning and training was targeted toward integrating technology into content lessons; however, it was not clear that leaders were monitoring changes in classroom activities as a result of professional development. There was a lack of student creativity and innovation in classroom lessons using technology resources allocated to the schools.

There was a skeleton quality assurance plan available in the system artifacts, but it lacked measurable action plans with benchmarks for improvement, program monitoring strategies with evaluation protocols, and timelines aligned to the system's strategic plan. The written District Quality Assurance Plan included many strategies; however, there were very few measurable action steps cited or expectations for monitoring or evaluation. Although the district has implemented several new programs in the past two years, there was no longitudinal data available to determine program effectiveness. There were district-wide safety and public relations plans available; however, there were no consistent expectations that guide teaching and learning across the district. Since no succession planning was evident, it did not appear that there was any urgency to make organizational effectiveness written and formal. The school board is highly functioning, and there is a symbiotic relationship between the board and the district leaders. However, if the board make-up changes and/or top leaders leave, there is no assurance that the outstanding building blocks available in the district now, as the positive culture, outstanding board/leadership relationships, community trust, quality teacher retention strategies, effective and efficient financial support, and safe, secure, and modern facilities will continue.

Although classrooms reflected a positive school culture of respect and rapport, creating innovative, personalized

classroom learning environments were not evident. It was not observed that students were using their knowledge and skills in authentic project-based and problem-based learning activities in order for students to make connections to real-life experiences. In observations by team members, classrooms consistently lacked rigor, technology integration, and classroom differentiation. These observations mirrored the local results found in reviews in 806 classrooms conducted by staff in the Walton County Schools. During classroom observations, the majority of teachers were using whole-class instruction. Although some students were grouped for center-based activities, it was not clear if the groups were created using data for differentiated instruction. For example, in many elementary classrooms, groups of students routinely moved from one center to another without regard to which students needed which targeted instruction from the center activities. Students were observed using computers; however, they were engaged in low-level remediation and assessment activities. According to the results for the AdvancED student surveys, the things most often done while in class were “listening to the teacher” (70%) and “completing worksheets” (56%). Activities least incorporated in classrooms included presentations (5%) and completing long term projects (9%) as reported by students. In like manner, parents indicated, in their AdvancED survey responses, their students were doing the following things most often in the classroom: “Listening to the Teacher” (63%), “Completing Worksheets” (50%) and “Taking Tests” (50%).

In summary, if student engagement, motivation, and achievement are to improve over time, school and district leaders will need to plan for professional learning, targeting innovative, and personalized learning environments with research-based instructional strategies in all classrooms throughout the district. School leaders will need to show what effective 21st Century technology integration looks like in daily classroom lessons. Principals and school leaders will need to monitor for differentiated learning activities related to student interest and choice. In order to demonstrate effective classroom instruction, leaders will need to contact high performing schools and arrange for teachers to observe classroom lessons that reflect high expectations for students and individualized yet collaborative educational environments with creative and innovative student lessons.

Insights in this narrative point to outstanding practices, such as a dedicated and cohesive school board, positive school cultures, effective hiring and retention processes, and efficient resource management that need to be continued. There are also promising practices cited that could move the district and the schools to higher levels of student achievement and organizational effectiveness essential for the district’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 elect 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
<p>Dr. Vicki DeMao Lead Evaluator</p>	<p>Dr. DeMao is a lead evaluator for AdvancED and has worked in more than thirteen different states in the Midwest and in the South, leading teams of educators in more than 35 different school systems, charter schools, special purpose schools, and systems, corporations, early learning schools, and educational service agencies. Her current responsibilities include consultant and administrator for Centerville-Abington Community Schools and field consultant for Indiana NCA/AdvancED schools identified for school improvement under Title I guidelines. Her past educational experiences include kindergarten teacher, principal of two different elementary schools, and central office administrator for gifted education, federal programs coordinator, and grant writer. She has been a professor at University of the Pacific in Stockton, California; director of elementary and secondary education for Richmond Community School in Indiana; and field coach for gifted education in the state of Indiana. Dr. DeMao has written publications and been a presenter at state and national conferences. She works with schools and school districts in Indiana to implement the state laws governing gifted education identification, service options, and program evaluation.</p>
<p>Toni Stivender</p>	<p>Mrs. Stivender is a retired teacher and administrator who spent 46 years in education. She is currently contracted with the School Board of Highlands County serving as a peer evaluator for new teachers in the district as well as continuing her work with AdvancED. Her work with AdvancED began in the late '90s, and she has seen many changes in the process over the years. It has been a rewarding experience for her and the best hands-on professional development she has experienced. During her work as an educator, she has experience at elementary, middle, and high school levels as well as an adjunct instructor at the community college. She was a teacher at all levels and an administrator at the middle and high school levels. Mrs. Stivender earned her bachelor's degree from Florida State University and her master's degree from University of South Florida</p>
<p>Nathan Gerrells</p>	<p>Mr. Gerrells is in his 13th year in education. He has the unique history of teaching in all three levels, elementary, middle, and high school. Most of his experience has been in Lumpkin County, Georgia, but he also taught one year at Signature School in Evansville, Indiana. Currently, Mr. Gerrells is in his second year as assistant principal at Long Branch Elementary in Dahlonega, Georgia. Mr. Gerrells holds degrees in social science education and early childhood education from North Georgia College and State University, as well as an Ed.S. in curriculum and instruction from Kennesaw State University.</p>

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
<p>Dr. Brigid Nesmith</p>	<p>Dr. Nesmith began her educational career in 1998 at the high school level as an English and French teacher. She obtained her gifted and teacher support specialist endorsements which opened the door for a gifted teacher position at a middle school. To begin her career in administration, she moved to Sand Hill Elementary School as the instructional supervisor. After four years, she moved back to a middle school for another instructional supervisor position at South Effingham Middle School. Three years ago, she became principal at the same school. Her 20-year career has all been in Effingham County, Georgia. Dr. Nesmith earned master’s, specialist, and doctorate degrees from Georgia Southern University in educational leadership.</p>
<p>Jennifer Shirley</p>	<p>Mrs. Shirley is the director of elementary schools for the Carroll County School System in Carrollton, Georgia. As director, her areas of focus include curriculum, instruction, assessment, leadership development, professional learning, and strategic school improvement planning. In that position, she coordinates processes and learning structures for twelve elementary schools and oversees gifted education. Mrs. Shirley holds an Ed.S. in instructional leadership from Jacksonville State University. She has a B.A. in elementary education and an M.S. in educational leadership. She has been an educator for 20 years. Her experience includes being a teacher, assistant principal, and principal at the elementary level.</p>
<p>Kim Gillis</p>	<p>Ms. Gillis has been an educator in the Montgomery Public Schools (MPS) in Montgomery, Alabama for 29 years. She has a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of South Alabama (Mobile, AL) and a master’s degree in elementary education and certification as an educational administrator from Alabama State University (Montgomery, AL). She has served in various capacities as a classroom teacher, math coach, assistant principal, middle school principal, personnel specialist, director of human resources, and assistant superintendent. She is currently the chief of staff at Montgomery Public Schools. Mrs. Gillis served on a school accreditation team and is the accreditation facilitator in MPS.</p>

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About AdvancED

AdvancED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization serving the largest community of education professionals in the world. Founded on more than 100 years of work in continuous improvement, 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.

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