

Report of the External Review Team for Calhoun City School System

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Introduction

The External Review is an integral component of AdvancED Performance Accreditation and provides the institution with a comprehensive evaluation guided by the results of diagnostic instruments, in-depth review of data and documentation, and the professional judgment of a team of qualified and highly trained evaluators. A series of diagnostic instruments examines the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of leadership to effect continuous improvement, and the degree to which the institution optimizes its use of available resources to facilitate and support student success. The results of this evaluation are represented in the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) and through critical observations, namely, Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

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

Institutions seeking to gain or retain accreditation must meet AdvancED Standards specific to their institution type, demonstrate acceptable levels of student performance and the continuous improvement of student performance, and provide evidence of stakeholder engagement and satisfaction. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the conditions, processes, and practices within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness.

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

The AdvancED External Review Team uses AdvancED Standards, associated indicators and criteria related to student performance and stakeholder engagement to guide its evaluation. The Team examines adherence to standards as well as how the institution functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics expected of an accredited institution. The Standards, indicators and related criteria are evaluated using indicator-specific performance levels. The Team rates each indicator and criterion on a scale of 1 to 4. The final scores assigned to the indicators and criteria represent the average of the External Review Team members' individual ratings.

The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation. It energizes and equips the institution's leadership and stakeholders to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that

may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. External Review is a rigorous process that includes the in-depth examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with all stakeholder groups, and extensive observations of learning, instruction, and operations.

Use of Diagnostic Tools

A key to examining the institution is the design and use of diagnostic tools that reveal the effectiveness with which an institution creates conditions and implements processes and practices that impact student performance and success. In preparation for the External Review the institution conducted a Self Assessment that applied the standards and criteria for accreditation. The institution provided evidence to support its conclusions vis a vis organizational effectiveness in ensuring acceptable and improving levels of student performance.

- an indicator-based tool that connects the specific elements of the criteria to evidence gathered by the team;
- a student performance analytic that examines the quality of assessment instruments used by the institution, the integrity of the administration of the assessment to students, the quality of the learning results including the impact of instruction on student learning at all levels of performance, and the equity of learning that examines the results of student learning across all demographics;
- a stakeholder engagement instrument that examines the fidelity of administration and results of perception surveys seeking the perspective of students, parents, and teachers;
- a state-of-the-art, learner-centric observation instrument, the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) that quantifies students' engagement, attitudes and dispositions organized in 7 environments: Equitable Learning, High Expectations, Supportive Learning, Active Learning, Progress Monitoring and Feedback, Well-Managed Learning, and Digital Learning. All evaluators must be trained, reach acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability, and certified to use this research-based and validated instrument.

The External Review Team's findings and critical observations are shared in this report through the IEQ™ results as well as through the identification of Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

Index of Education Quality

In the past, accreditation reviews resulted in an accreditation recommendation on status. Labels such as advised, warned, probation, or all clear were used to describe the status of a school relative to the AdvancED Standards and other evaluative criteria. Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, AdvancED introduced a new framework to describe the results of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduced an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™). The IEQ™ comprises three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the capacity of leadership to guide the institution toward the achievement of its

vision and strategic priorities; and 3) use of resources to support and optimize learning. Therefore, your institution will no longer receive an accreditation status. Instead, your institution will be accredited with an IEQ™ score. In the case where an institution is failing to meet established criteria, the accreditation will be under review thereby requiring frequent monitoring and demonstrated improvement.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and associated indicators, the analysis of student performance, and the engagement and feedback of stakeholders. Within each domain institutions can connect to the individual performance levels that are applied in support of the AdvancED Standards and evaluative criteria. Within the performance levels are detailed descriptors that serve as a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report and building on their Powerful Practices, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Opportunity for Improvement and Improvement Priority as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected indicator(s).

The IEQ™ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. An institution's IEQ™ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Subsequent actions for improvement and evidence that these have had a positive impact will raise the institution's IEQ™ score.

Benchmark Data

Throughout this report, AdvancED provides benchmark data for each indicator and for each component of the evaluative criteria. These benchmark data represent the overall averages across the entire AdvancED Network for your institution type. Thus, the AdvancED Network average provides an extraordinary opportunity for institutions to understand their context on a global scale rather than simply compared to a state, region, or country.

It is important to understand that the AdvancED Network averages are provided primarily to serve as a tool for continuous improvement and not as a measure of quality in and of itself. Benchmark data, when wisely employed, have a unique capacity to help institutions identify and leverage their strengths and areas of improvement to significantly impact student learning.

Powerful Practices

A key to continuous improvement is the institution's ability to learn from and build upon its most effective and impactful practices. Such practices serve as critical leverage points necessary to guide, support and ensure continuous improvement. A hallmark of the accreditation process is its commitment to identifying with evidence, the conditions, processes and practices that are having the most significant impact on student performance and institutional effectiveness. Throughout this report, the External Review Team has captured and defined Powerful Practices. These noteworthy practices are essential to the institution's effort to continue its journey of improvement.

Opportunities for Improvement

Every institution can and must improve no matter what levels of performance it has achieved in its past. During the process of the review, the External Review Team identified areas of improvement where the institution is meeting the expectations for accreditation but in the professional judgment of the Team these are Opportunities for Improvement that should be considered by the institution. Using the criteria described in the corresponding rubric(s) to the Opportunity for Improvement, the institution can identify what elements of practice must be addressed to guide the improvement.

Improvement Priorities

The expectations for accreditation are clearly defined in a series of the rubric-based AdvancED Standards, indicators and evaluative criteria focused on the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of the institution to be guided by effective leadership, and the allocation and use of resources to support student learning. As such, the External Review Team reviewed, analyzed and deliberated over significant bodies of evidence provided by the institution and gathered by the Team during the process. In the professional judgment of the Team as well as the results of the diagnostic process, the Team defined, with rationale, Improvement Priorities. The priorities must be addressed in a timely manner by the institution to retain and improve their accreditation performance as represented by the IEQ™. Improvement Priorities serve as the basis for the follow-up and monitoring process that will begin upon conclusion of the External Review. The institution must complete and submit an Accreditation Progress Report within two years of the External Review. The report must include actions taken by the institution to address the Improvement Priorities along with the corresponding evidence and results. The IEQ™ will be recalculated by AdvancED upon review of the evidence and results associated with the Improvement Priorities.

The Review

The Calhoun City Schools External Review Team convened at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon, November 8, 2015 in the hotel conference room. System personnel had made appropriate arrangements with the hotel for a very comfortable stay for the Team. The Team was comprised of the Lead Evaluator from Louisiana, one Team member from Alabama, three in-state Team members and one in-state member representing the Charter Systems Division of the Georgia Department of Education.

Previous to the Sunday afternoon meeting in Calhoun, the Team utilized the AdvancED Team Workspace to share AdvancED documents, tools, and the system documents. System personnel provided a formidable amount of documentation to support the evidentiary process of the External Review including the system Accreditation Report, school Accreditation Reports, continuous improvement plans and other related documents to be reviewed by the Team. This review and subsequent examination of evidences strongly supported the work of the Team and their deliberations. The Team had also met via conference call to establish Team assignments and responsibilities, discuss the evidence and artifacts available at the time, and establish Team processes that were utilized throughout the preparations and the Review.

The system leadership which included the superintendent, some central office personnel and all school board

members participated in a brief "meet-and-greet" dinner with the External Review Team at Calhoun High School on Sunday evening which served to establish rapport between the Team and these system personnel that was ongoing throughout the Review. The Team noted the close camaraderie, trust, professional respect and openness these system personnel shared. This same closeness was noted between the large majority of school personnel. After the meeting the Team continued team building processes and preparations for the next day at the central office.

On Monday, the Team was transported by system personnel again to the high school for a day of meetings with central office personnel, system stakeholders and school principals. The Monday meetings, interviews and the examination of artifacts and evidences took place smoothly and efficiently according to the schedule agreed upon by the Team and system personnel. At the end of the workday the Team was transported back to the hotel for dinner and the work sessions planned for the evening.

The schools in the system were visited on Tuesday, the eleot™ observations conducted as well as interviews with students, teachers and school personnel. The school visits were notable because of the consistent focus on high quality teaching and learning in every school. Teachers echoed the sentiment of stakeholders interviewed: "Calhoun- A place for every child to thrive." Throughout the Monday and Tuesday events similar statements were echoed: "We are family," and, "I couldn't take my kids anywhere else."

At the end of the day, the Team returned to the hotel for data entry, dinner and the evening work session. The eleot™ observations were completed and, after the Team confirmed and discussed how the scores are very reflective of what was seen in the classrooms, they enjoyed another dinner supplied by local restaurants and facilitated by system personnel. The work session continued in order to share data across the Standards and to complete the final round of Indicator ratings.

The Team was transported and carpoled on Wednesday morning to the high school for the scheduled day of work. The work session continued through lunch and concluded with the Exit Report that was presented during a called school board meeting. This meeting was attended by the entire school board plus central office and school personnel.

The Calhoun City Schools External Review Team extends their thanks to all personnel for their generous hospitality and for their concerted, thorough efforts on their Internal Review. The quality of the External Review is indicative of how the system involves stakeholders in their processes and guides all to work in harmony for the good of their students. The range of surveys conducted by the system included the required AdvancED surveys and the results corroborate the high levels of stakeholder involvement and support for the system. The Team found a notable level of alignment and common practices among the schools, this finding supported by the informative and frank statements of school personnel during visits to the schools. Eleot™ scores from the classroom observations further corroborate the strength of school level practices supporting instruction.

Stakeholders were interviewed by members of the External Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's effectiveness and student performance. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the External

Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Superintendents	1
Board Members	5
Administrators	25
Instructional Staff	59
Support Staff	2
Students	37
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	40
Total	169

Results

Teaching and Learning Impact

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	3.00	2.68
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.	2.00	2.50
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	3.00	2.55
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.00	2.73
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	3.00	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	3.00	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	3.00	2.60

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	4.00	2.92
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	3.00	2.40
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	2.00	2.53
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	3.00	2.64
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.00	2.66

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	2.00	2.66
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	3.00	2.41
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	3.00	2.15
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.	3.00	2.46
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.	3.00	2.72

Student Performance Diagnostic

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

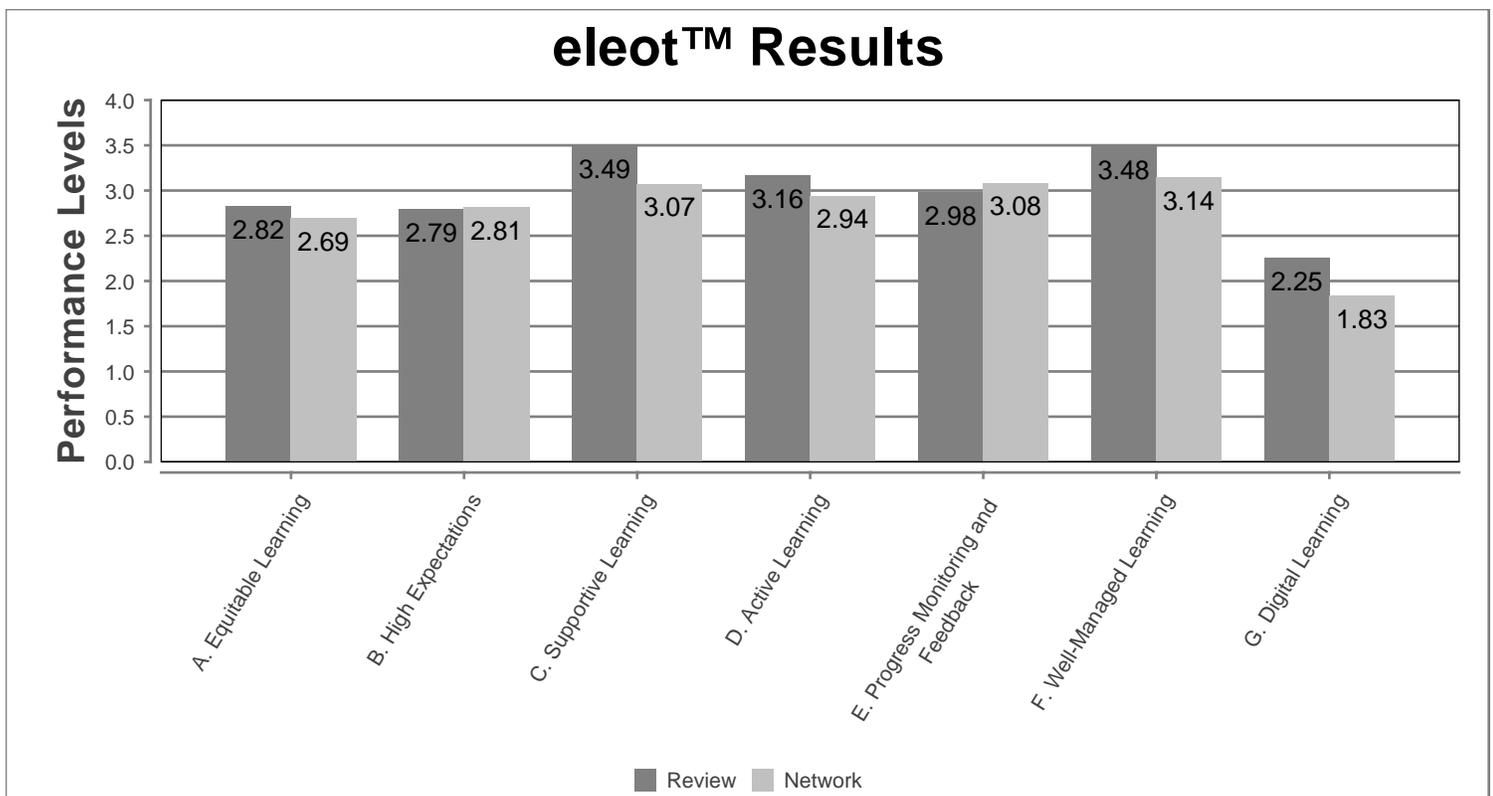
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	4.00	3.28
Test Administration	4.00	3.50
Equity of Learning	2.80	2.44
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.97

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

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



A total of fifty eleot™ observations and a number of informal walkthrough observations were conducted in all of the schools of the system. Team members interviewed fifty-nine teachers, thirty-seven students and several support staff while in the schools. The observations and interviews on Tuesday greatly broadened the understanding of the system- how the system provides the education processes for students, their successes and their challenges.

The eleot™ observations resulted in a system picture of thoughtful deliberate instruction delivered to students for acquisition of knowledge and skills. Students were often involved in teacher-led class discussions and strived to meet the expectations of the teachers, responding to the teachers and their peers in a positive, respectful manner. Student engagement most often involved individual written or oral responses to questions or tasks that were presented to them. Many instances of hands-on learning, higher-order thinking activities and small group work were noted but these could have been higher among the classes observed. The integration of technology that was actually utilized by the students was noted in the observations. Classroom management was not an issue in any classes since teachers are proactive and utilize their experience and relationships with the students to keep them engaged which circumvents potentially disruptive situations.

The classroom visits were conducted across the system in core classrooms as well as elective courses per the AdvancED observation protocol. The seven learning environments were observed and results tallied to produce a snapshot of the school learning environments across the system. The eleot™ averages for five of the seven domains are above the AdvancED Network (AEN) scores and all seven are described below. The AEN score provides a basis for comparison between the system's scores and those of similar institutions accredited by AdvancED.

The Equitable Learning Environment scored 2.82 compared to the AEN score of 2.69.

This score confirms that students have equal access to classroom instruction and activities and know that behavioral expectations are fair and consistently applied. The score supports the commendable behavior, on-task behaviors and engagement levels the Team observed in most classrooms. A strength in this environment is the equal access to activities, instruction and support enjoyed by students. A low indicator for this environment concerns opportunities for students to learn about other students in the classrooms, their cultures and differences.

The High Expectations Environment scored 2.79 in comparison to the AEN score of 2.81

The Team observed that students know and strive to meet the high expectations established by the teacher and are tasked with activities and learning that are attainable. A student told an observer: "He always makes learning fun. We get to work in groups a lot, but we still have to look up stuff on our own."

Many engaging discussions were witnessed that challenged student knowledge and thinking. This score could have been higher had teachers consistently provided examples of the work they expect and moved more away from teacher-centered learning activities to increase rigor and higher order thinking. Learning tasks and responding to questioning that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing) is an area for improvement as well.

The Supportive Learning Environment score of 3.49 is above the AEN of 3.07.

The Team found students to be very positive about the learning experiences in their classrooms. Classrooms

exhibited high rates of on-task behaviors and engagement even in those where instruction was more traditional. Additional or alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge to meet learning needs scored lowest in this environment. Though students are attentive and rise to the expectations of the teachers, monitoring of individual progress and providing individual assistance could be improved.

The Active Learning Environment score of 3.16 is above the AEN of 2.94.

The stronger indicators on active engagement in discussions and activities are evident in this environment. Teachers facilitate some opportunities to make connections between learning and students' lives but this is an area for improvement in instructional strategies. The Team noted the free-flow of comfortable conversations among students as well as between students and teachers that could easily evolve into more connections with students' lives and experiences.

Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment scored 2.98 in comparison to the AEN of 3.08, one of the system's two scores below the AEN.

Students demonstrate their understanding of the content being presented through completion of the work expected and through participation in classroom activities. The Team noted few indications that students understand how their work is assessed. This finding relates to the teacher-centered model of instruction, the provision of examples of the product expected from students, and teachers individualizing instruction and checking for understanding of that instruction.

The Well-Managed Learning Environment scored 3.48 compared to 3.14 on the AEN.

Speaking and interacting respectfully with teachers and peers scored high along with following classroom rules and working well with others. These scores are high because of the high expectations and culture that are consistently maintained throughout the schools of the system. Within this domain are also indicators on classroom transitions that are smoothly and efficiently executed and collaboration with other students during student-centered activities, both of which scored lower. Fewer classroom transitions were observed because learning activities tend toward large group and were teacher-centered. Student collaboration is most often large group discussion which affords minimal opportunity for quality collaboration. Many examples of small group student collaboration were observed in various formats that could be shared among the classroom professionals. It should be noted again that this Environment scored well above the AEN.

The Digital Learning Environment score of 2.25 is above the AEN of 1.82

This AEN score across accredited institutions appears low because educators everywhere are struggling to learn what their students can do instinctively- utilize digital tools/technology in learning processes. The 2.25 score is a commendable score and indicates the progress the system is making in technology-supported teaching and learning.

The Team found a number of instances in which technology was being used though mainly in large group,

display fashion, to communicate and work collaboratively for learning. The use of personal electronic devices such as Smartphones, iPads and Chromebooks was found in a number of classrooms supporting effective learning activities. This indicates the willingness of these teachers to integrate technology into their teaching and learning practices and embrace 21st Century technology. However, room for growth is apparent using digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, to create original works for learning, support differentiation and higher order learning tasks, and to facilitate collaboration and communication to provide highly productive learning situations.

Class observations utilizing the eleot™ observation tool revealed many levels of student engagement. Classes observed had almost one hundred per cent engagement in the learning activities with multiple opportunities to participate in discussions with their teacher and peers. This is indicative of the high expectations of the community and system for student behavior. Teachers and students continually engaged in dialogue that addressed conceptual understanding and provided feedback on the level of understanding and redirection toward mastery of the content standard. In many instances, students utilized technology independently, in small groups and in whole class setting in manners that enhanced the learning experience, allowed for student directed investigation of content, and provided evidence that these experiences are normal practices. Some classes provided exemplars for student work and featured student-directed, teacher-facilitated learning centers.

During an observation of an elementary mathematics class, a summary review of previous instruction focused on multiplication. The teacher posed inquiries related to the question, "What strategies have I learned to help me understand how to multiply?" Students were discussing problem-solving examples in response to the teacher's question. Well-behaved and well-mannered students interacted with the teacher demonstrating a positive attitude about learning. The teacher then showed a multiplication video. Students viewed the video quietly and attentively with a few students asking the teacher to increase the volume so they could hear the video better.

After viewing the video, the responses of students indicated they had enjoyed and understood the content. The teacher then instructed students to begin working in centers. Included among the groups were the red group that gathered to work at the red table, Chromebook group, and iPad group that the teacher directed to see her for instructions. Students appeared to be working very effectively in their groups, collaborating with each other, and interacting in a respectful manner as they began working together to accomplish their tasks.

Another observation was of a lesson where students were discussing their ideas for a service learning project. The teacher facilitated the activity but students were taking the lead. The students concluded with suggesting enhancements at their school that support school safety for the students and the adults. The students applied their prior knowledge to engage in application of new learning and were fully aware of how their project and decisions might ultimately affect the lives of many people, thus making a connection between their lives and others.

Eleot™ classroom observations confirm that there is an environment of caring and mutual respect between the classroom teachers and students that is pervasive across the system. Students generally enter the

classrooms in an orderly fashion and are aware of what is expected of them when they arrive. Teachers greet students upon arrival and utilize a minimum amount of time to complete the routine daily items such as taking attendance.

The Team noted the limited use of exemplars in the classrooms visited; teachers commonly provided generalized feedback in large group as assignments were reviewed with students. Many instances were observed of teachers providing individualized review and feedback on assignments though this systemic practice could be improved supporting the high scores in the Supportive Learning Environment.

The following eleot™ data summary provides a breakdown of average scores in each of the seven learning environments as well as for each Indicator. The Team discussed how effectively the strong scores in each environment identified strong classroom practices that have kept student and system performance at strong levels. These practices should be clearly defined, strengthened, and used as models for improvement. At the same time, the lower Indicator scores clearly identify areas for improvement that, when addressed through systemic alignment and improvement processes, will provide improvement across the spectrum of Indicators.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.66	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	34.00%	22.00%	20.00%	24.00%
2.	3.54	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	58.00%	38.00%	4.00%	0.00%
3.	3.46	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	66.00%	20.00%	8.00%	6.00%
4.	1.60	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	18.00%	0.00%	6.00%	76.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.82						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.30	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	48.00%	40.00%	6.00%	6.00%
2.	3.00	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	20.00%	62.00%	16.00%	2.00%
3.	2.04	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	20.00%	16.00%	12.00%	52.00%
4.	2.74	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	22.00%	36.00%	36.00%	6.00%
5.	2.86	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	24.00%	42.00%	30.00%	4.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.79						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.70	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	72.00%	26.00%	2.00%	0.00%
2.	3.66	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	70.00%	26.00%	4.00%	0.00%
3.	3.60	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	70.00%	20.00%	10.00%	0.00%
4.	3.54	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	62.00%	30.00%	8.00%	0.00%
5.	2.94	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	46.00%	20.00%	16.00%	18.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.49						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.48	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	56.00%	36.00%	8.00%	0.00%
2.	2.50	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	32.00%	22.00%	10.00%	36.00%
3.	3.50	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	72.00%	10.00%	14.00%	4.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.16						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.02	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	38.00%	36.00%	16.00%	10.00%
2.	3.26	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	46.00%	36.00%	16.00%	2.00%
3.	3.18	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	42.00%	36.00%	20.00%	2.00%
4.	2.64	Understands how her/his work is assessed	36.00%	22.00%	12.00%	30.00%
5.	2.82	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	32.00%	28.00%	30.00%	10.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.98						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.70	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	76.00%	20.00%	2.00%	2.00%
2.	3.74	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	76.00%	22.00%	2.00%	0.00%
3.	3.12	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	58.00%	16.00%	6.00%	20.00%
4.	3.20	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	56.00%	24.00%	4.00%	16.00%
5.	3.66	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	74.00%	20.00%	4.00%	2.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.48						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.54	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	40.00%	12.00%	10.00%	38.00%
2.	2.18	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	30.00%	10.00%	8.00%	52.00%
3.	2.02	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	20.00%	10.00%	22.00%	48.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.25						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop and implement a system-level process to integrate components of student assessment into a comprehensive student learning assessment system that includes standardized, state-mandated and locally developed tests to ensure the use of reliable and valid measurements across all educational programs.

(Indicator 5.1, SP1. Assessment Quality)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 5.1

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with district staff and document reviews revealed that the system uses a vast array of assessment instruments to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness. Directors of various departments identified the numerous measurement sources currently in use. Among testing measures described by staff were Milestones, End-of-Course tests, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, SAT, PSAT, STAR Reading and Mathematics, Student Learning Objectives, Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners, and AIMSweb.

However, evidence did not include a composite document with a compilation and detailed description of multiple measures including these standardized, state, and locally-developed assessment tools nor was there an evaluation process specified to determine student progress and system effectiveness. There was no specific description to explain how the data from each measure were used for specific purposes systemically. Interviews with system personnel indicated their awareness of this challenge. Sub-group data analysis and utilization is an additional challenge which is addressed elsewhere in this report.

The student learning assessment system should provide for the collection of a comprehensive and representative sample of student performance data that is sufficient in scope to support making valid conclusions about student achievement and evaluating program and system effectiveness. These data can serve as a basis for setting benchmarks, guiding the decision-making process during the development of goals for improvement, and evaluating the effectiveness of programs.

By developing and implementing a specifically designed comprehensive assessment system that is consistently utilized to produce data from multiple sources, the district can measure the degree of success of its programs, student learning, and system effectiveness.

Improvement Priority

Strengthen the disaggregation and analysis of subgroup data to identify and address the academic, social and emotional needs of every learner.

(Indicator 3.2, Indicator 5.1, SP1. Assessment Quality)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.2

Evidence and Rationale

An extensive document review and interviews with staff revealed that the district has considerable information from various data sources. However, the need was also identified for more in-depth use of data focused on various student subgroups within the system. Little information was provided as to how subgroups are identified, their needs detailed, and what responses the system provides for the needs of these students.

Refining the existing student assessment system to provide adequate disaggregated formative and summative data will effectively inform the evaluation of the performance of all student subgroups which will, in turn, guide instructional practices and professional learning. Additionally, more intensive data analysis will ensure the alignment of RTI (Response to Intervention) support and other services, staffing allocations, and budgetary considerations. The results will be the continuous improvement of the CCRPI (College and Career Readiness Performance Index) score, the system graduation rate and other student performance indicators.

Opportunity For Improvement

Develop, implement and communicate consistent grading systems that represent the attainment of content knowledge that are consistent across grade levels and courses.

(Indicator 3.10)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.10

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews and examination of course syllabi indicate steps toward consistent grading and reporting have been taken across multiple grade levels. System and school level personnel indicated their awareness that

improvement in this area at the primary and elementary level are needed.

A clear policy delineating methods of grading and reporting, developed for all grade levels, will provide for greater understanding of and support for the educational processes of the system.

Powerful Practice

The Calhoun City School System maintains a strong parent engagement process to insure ongoing understanding of and involvement in their childrens' learning processes.

(Indicator 3.8)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.8

Evidence and Rationale

Stakeholders described how the multiple venues of involvement and communication are strongly supported by school system. Records were provided of a robust media presence including websites, social media, newspaper and newsletters, and radio updates coupled with parent phone calls and text updates utilizing the "Remind101" system, a mobile messaging platform that allows teachers to send reminders and information to students and parents via text and email. Formally scheduled progress reporting dates, bi-annual face-to-face parent conference rates of 100 per cent, along with periodic updates from classroom teachers, school level interventionists, counselors, administrators, and parent liaisons were evidence to show multiple avenues for two way communication about student progress. Additionally, parents stay "plugged in" to student progress via the Infinite Campus parent portal allowing "24-7" updates on class level achievement. The Team noted how the fluency of the language with which all stakeholders described these practices is solid evidence of their systematic use of these provisions.

The culture of high expectations for performance of students and system personnel is sustained through the comprehensive systematic means for two-way communications that generate satisfaction in and support for the system.

Leadership Capacity

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	3.00	2.62
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	3.00	2.63
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	3.00	2.89
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.	2.80	2.61

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	3.00	2.95
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.80	2.92
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	3.60	3.12
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	3.00	2.97
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	3.00	2.67

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	3.00	2.76

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

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

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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.36
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.20	3.04

Findings

Powerful Practice

Because of their commitment to ongoing training in governance and leadership, the school board functions as a cohesive unit to enact effective policies through informed decision-making in accordance with its roles and responsibilities to ensure effective system operation and student learning.

(Indicator 2.2, Indicator 2.3)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.2

Evidence and Rationale

The Team heard from stakeholders how the Calhoun City Schools Board of Education keeps current with the state-required board training plan and continually goes above what is required by the state. The board has been identified as a Distinguished Board of Education by the Georgia School Boards Association. Interviews with central office administration, school leaders and stakeholders revealed their perceptions of how the policies enacted by the board and their functioning as a cohesive support the effective operation of the system to promote student learning. The Team noted further evidence of the effectiveness of the board in the fiscal

stability and well being of the school system.

The responsible actions of the governing body positively impact the ability of the system to operate effectively on an ongoing basis thereby supporting instruction and promoting student learning. The fiscal stability of the system greatly supports the instructional programs through the effective allocation of human and instructional resources as well as the physical learning environments.

Powerful Practice

Students of Calhoun City Schools benefit from the highly developed culture of respect, learning and high expectations that has been deliberately established and systemically supported by system leaders, staff and community stakeholders.

(Indicator 1.3)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 1.3

Evidence and Rationale

The system, through a carefully executed process of stakeholder involvement and input supported by community expectations, has established a strong culture of high expectations for student success and for the performance of all personnel of the system. A system staff member stated: "Our system works because we are Calhoun." Interviews across the stakeholder spectrum revealed the very strong support, advocacy for and belief in the school system for providing for the academic, physical, social and emotional education of Calhoun children.

A strength of the Accreditation Report was in the descriptions of the mission and beliefs of the Calhoun community and how these are evidenced in the very large variety of academic and extracurricular programs sustained by the system. In the words of a school board member: "We're proud of our unity of purpose. Our students WANT to succeed!" This sentiment was continually echoed by students, teachers, system personnel, parents and community leaders clearly indicating the strength of the education culture.

Students are strongly supported by the culture of respect, learning and high expectations that are systemically sustained and intentionally nurtured by leaders, staff and community stakeholders.

Resource Utilization

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

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

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

Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	2.20	2.92
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	3.00	2.93
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.80	3.05
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	3.00	2.63

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	3.00	2.74
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	3.00	2.54
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	3.00	2.66
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.	3.00	2.60

Findings

Opportunity For Improvement

Develop a comprehensive sustainability plan for the current federally funded \$1.2 million dollar counseling grant to ensure continuity of current academic, social, fiscal, and human resources which serve the students of the system.

(Indicator 4.7)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.7

Evidence and Rationale

Calhoun City Schools worked diligently to be among a select group of school systems to attain the federal grant which increased counseling and social work programs to include support for students at all levels. At present, the grant is in the third year of implementation and there is limited evidence to suggest that a comprehensive review is in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs, processes, services plus human and fiscal resources funded by the grant. The Team discussed how this program positively impacts students as well as system personnel and how all will be affected if and when this program is no longer funded.

Developing a plan to sustain the significant aspects of this program already in place will provide the continued support that students, system personnel and the community have come to expect as well as guide the system in future sustainability efforts.

Opportunity For Improvement

Develop and implement a process that will guide and ensure the alignment of all system programs, initiatives and operations with the mission, strategic plan and guiding statements of the system.

(Indicator 4.4)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.4

Evidence and Rationale

From the system Accreditation Report: “Calhoun City Schools believes that the engagement of young people in rigorous programs that focus on their individual strengths and interests is the way to improvement, achievement, and enthusiasm for lifelong learning.” In support of this belief, the system touts its very wide variety of partnerships, programs, initiatives and emphases, each of which must be monitored and supported by system personnel as well as by other system resources. The Team viewed and heard about the long lists of achievements and awards for system students, personnel and the system itself. The system belief in engaging “the community as a classroom” was highly visible in most aspects of system operations; all stakeholders interviewed strongly confirmed their belief in and support of the principles of family, community, involvement, quality and effectiveness espoused by the system. “We wear many hats,” was a frequent comment from system employees and the Team noted that personnel wear these hats with pride. Their commitment to their students and willingness “to do whatever it takes” is apparent.

Most programs and initiatives have been established with specific intent. Powerful mission, purpose and belief statements and unifying goals are evident throughout the system in various formats, particularly the tagline “A Tradition of Excellence.” Whether every aspect of system operations is guided by and analyzed for close alignment with the guiding statements can only be determined by system personnel. A discussion began among the Team concerning how far Calhoun personnel and the human resources they provide could be stretched before reaching a point of decline in system and personnel effectiveness, morale or wellness.

The most important measure of school system function is the quality of the classroom experience for learners. The eleot™ observation scores for classrooms in the Calhoun system are slightly above the AEN in five of the seven learning environments indicating that students, on the average, are provided with the level of quality learning found among institutions accredited by AdvancED. These scores are commendable but indicate room for growth as well.

The Team discussed how the system should strengthen their current momentum and intensify systemic focus on improving instruction and increasing student performance by clearly defining the body of knowledge, skills, attributes, attitudes and experiences to be provided to every Calhoun student through the course of their education journey. Improvements in student performance can be sustained by the careful examination and alignment of all processes, programs and initiatives with the guiding statements of the system with the focus on increasing student performance.

Interviews with system personnel and examination of documents revealed no structured guidance that draws the specifics of system elements together to unite and align all system operations to meet carefully defined expectations. The system and its students will benefit from a process that will ensure the alignment of all system guidance, programs, initiatives and operations with the mission, strategic plan, guiding statements and system beliefs about teaching and learning.

Opportunity For Improvement

Evaluate the current practices and processes for the recruitment and retention of qualified staff members to bring staffing into greater alignment with and reflective of the current and projected demographics of the overall student population.

(Indicator 4.1)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.1

Evidence and Rationale

Examination of documentation and interviews indicate that the system recognizes the need to attract and recruit a more diverse qualified staff population that reflects the changing demographics of students and community. System personnel related some of their efforts as well as their frustrations concerning this challenge.

A focus on cultural diversity that is representative of local demographics and external partners will assist in the support and evaluation of diversity efforts including hiring and recruitment practices as well as wrap around support programs for the social, emotional, and academic support for students, parents and system staff members.

Powerful Practice

Calhoun City Schools maintains high quality educational and athletic facilities, both traditional and non-traditional, that have been intentionally designed to meet the academic, physical, social and emotional needs of Calhoun students.

(Indicator 4.3)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.3

Evidence and Rationale

The adoption of clearly defined expectations and internal processes for maintaining a safe, clean, and a healthy environment for the students, faculty, and community has resulted in learning environments highly conducive to learning supported by effective support processes across the system. Team members noted how the highly consistent repair, maintenance and support procedures were visible in buildings, equipment and operations everywhere they went. The Team also noted the long-range strategic plans for the continuous improvement of existing and new facilities, 21st Century technology enhancements, and other infrastructure support.

The high quality, safe and secure facilities, equipment and maintenance procedures generate high levels of confidence, support for and participation in system practices and operations and, most importantly, provide for the undistracted focus of teachers and students on all things supporting students' academic, social and emotional preparation " . . . to become lifelong learners in the pursuit of excellence." (from the system mission

statement).

Conclusion

The following discussions provide additional insights into the themes and issues examined by the External Review Team.

Technology Integration

The drive to bring the system fully into 21st Century technology status should be directed by the guiding statements crafted by stakeholders after careful analysis and planning to make sure that every dollar spent and every instructional minute counts. System planners and instructional personnel should take advantage of the factors relating to the strong *eleot*[™] scores in the Digital Learning Environment that are above those of the AdvancED Educational Network (AEN) by clearly identifying and building upon those factors impacting those scores.

Strength and Diversity of the Teaching Force

The system exhibits its commitment to the community and to the high quality education of students through the systematic process to recruit and retain highly qualified professionals for the classrooms. Examples of high quality classroom instruction exist across the system serve as models for improvement. All students have access to the teacher, discussions, activities and support for their learning needs.

A focus on cultural diversity that is representative of the community, students and external partners and reflected in system personnel will assist in the support and evaluation of all diversity efforts including hiring and recruitment practices as well as wrap around support programs for the social, emotional, and academic support for students and their parents.

Use of Student and System Performance Data

Although the Team did not view a specifically designed comprehensive assessment system, components of the student assessments that are used to guide instruction were provided. The tendency of the data analysis seemed to be to focus on a few highly significant factors such as the graduation rate and the College and Career Ready Performance Index. A complete and in-depth analysis that provides adequate disaggregated formative and summative data to evaluate the performance of all student subgroups was not presented. The Team noted how future changes in demographics, funding (such as the federal counseling initiative), and personnel affect student performance in ways that can be identified and addressed with deep analysis of the appropriate data.

A complete student learning assessment system should provide for the collection of a comprehensive and representative sample of student performance data that is sufficient in scope to support making valid conclusions about student achievement and evaluating program and system effectiveness. Using their data, the system should align all programs, initiatives and operations with clearly defined goals for student achievement.

Continued Growth through Systemic Focus

Calhoun City Schools is a high performing system that has been finely tuned over time through emphasis on their beliefs and strong, effective leadership. Improvements in student and system performance can be made and sustained by the careful examination and alignment of all processes, programs, initiatives and resources. Important points for improved alignment are in the areas noted by the Team: refinement of the student assessments into a true assessment system, consistency in grading and reporting, focus on subgroup performance, support for students through attention to diversity, and specific plans to sustain important, successful programs already in place.

This report provides "Improvement Priorities" which the External Review Team determined to be next steps in improvement of school and student performance. Additionally, "Powerful Practices" and "Opportunities for Improvement" provide additional support and guidance toward meeting the Improvement Priorities. These "Actions" do not stand alone, but are inter-related to the Opportunities and build on the Powerful Practices in the sense that strengths and improvement in one area support growth in the others, thus empowering the systemic operations supporting continual improvement in student performance.

The system conducted an effective Internal Review, the resulting Indicator ratings pointing to the system understanding of their successes as well as the challenges they face. The internal and external school communities are very pleased with the success of the system because the system is focused on community beliefs about academics, extracurricular activities and needs of the overall student population. Improvements in student performance will come through closer alignment of systemic practices guided by deep analysis of student and system performance data.

Improvement Priorities

The institution should use the findings from this review to guide the continuous improvement process. The institution must address the Improvement Priorities listed below:

- Develop and implement a system-level process to integrate components of student assessment into a comprehensive student learning assessment system that includes standardized, state-mandated and locally developed tests to ensure the use of reliable and valid measurements across all educational programs.
- Strengthen the disaggregation and analysis of subgroup data to identify and address the academic, social and emotional needs of every learner.

Accreditation Recommendation

Index of Education Quality

The Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) provides a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of indicators and evaluative criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus.

The IEQ™ comprises three domains: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; and 3) the use of resources and data to support and optimize learning.

The overall and domain scores can range from 100-400. The domain scores are derived from: the AdvancED Standards and indicators ratings; results of the Analysis of Student Performance; and data from Stakeholder Feedback Surveys (students, parents, and staff).

	External Review IEQ Score	AdvancED Network Average
Overall Score	305.37	278.34
Teaching and Learning Impact	299.05	268.94
Leadership Capacity	320.00	292.64
Resource Utilization	300.00	283.23

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

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

Addenda

Individual Institution Results (Self-reported)

Institution Name	Teaching and Learning Impact	Leadership Capacity	Resource Utilization	Overall IEQ Score
Calhoun Elementary School	280.95	381.82	271.43	307.69
Calhoun High School	309.52	345.45	314.29	320.51
Calhoun Middle School	266.67	300.00	257.14	274.36
Calhoun Primary School	371.43	390.91	300.00	364.10

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Dr. Drew Moore	<p>Drew Moore began his teaching career as an elementary music teacher in Shreveport, Louisiana. In 1978 he moved to the Middle Laboratory School at Northwestern State University adding multiple subjects to his teaching repertoire and began working in accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) which accredited his school. Professional experiences include public school education, media director at a residential high school for the gifted in math, science, and performing arts; instructor for the local university and university laboratory school administrator. Retired after thirty-three years in public and higher education, he now chairs and serves as Team Member on External Review Teams at the school, district, distance learning, and corporate levels. Drew also serves on the Louisiana State AdvancED/SACS committee and the AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Degrees include: Bachelor of Music Education, Master's in Music, Specialist Degree in Public School Administration and Doctorate in Education Technologies from Northwestern State University in Louisiana and additional graduate work at Memphis State University in Tennessee and Louisiana State University- Shreveport.</p>
Dr. Greg Benton	<p>Dr. Benton currently serves as an Area Superintendent in Henry County Schools, currently ranked the seventh largest public school system in Georgia. Dr. Benton has served in a P-12 public school system for 18 years, including experiences as a classroom teacher, assistant principal at the middle school level, building principal at the elementary level and at the Georgia Department of Education as a School Improvement Specialist and Director of Teacher and Leader Quality. Dr. Benton has a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Georgia State University, a Master's and Specialist degree in School Administration from The University of West Georgia, and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Mercer University.</p>
Mrs. Kathy Reifschneider	<p>Kathy Reifschneider retired from a career in public education after 34 years on June 30, 2013. At the time of her retirement she held the position of Director of Instruction. Under the umbrella of this position she facilitated district-wide curriculum and instruction development, district wide assessment and evaluation, coordinated the district Title 1 Program, and also facilitated district technology development and use. During her eighteen years at Festus she also facilitated the NCA CASI and later the AdvanEd accreditation processes. She has served as a Lead Evaluator for AdvancEd, facilitating School and System Accreditations, since 2010.</p>
Ms. Penny L Christian	<p>Ms. Christian is employed as a Social Studies Instructor at Francis Marion High School in Perry County. She is in her third year teaching social studies at Francis Marion School. Previously, she taught at Robert C. Hatch in Perry County for 22 years. Ms. Christian is a graduate of the University of Alabama. She has a Bachelors and Masters degree in Secondary Education Social Studies. In Alabama, she has an A and B teaching certificate. Ms. Christian is an ACCESS teacher. Ms. Christian has served on numerous AdvancED school and district teams both in state and out of state. She is trained to be a lead evaluator in the state of Alabama. Originally, she is from Tuscaloosa County in Alabama. Presently she lives in Uniontown.</p>

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Ms. Jennifer Greer</p>	<p>Ms. Jennifer Greer has achieved 16 years high school math experience at all levels from remedial to AP Calculus: East Rome High School, Rome GA Rome High School, Rome GA Clarke Central High School, Athens GA Model High School, Rome GA</p> <p>Jennifer also has 5 years Middle Grades Math experience at Clarke Middle School, Athens GA, and has served as teacher on Special Assignment, CCGPS facilitator in Math, Floyd County Schools (4 years) and as Academic Programs Coordinator, Floyd County Schools, (2 years).</p> <p>Degrees and certifications include: B.S. in Secondary Mathematics, Berry College M.Ed in Secondary Mathematics, Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville AL Gifted In-Field Endorsement, University of Georgia, Athens GA</p> <p>Jennifer has served on: State Superintendent's Advisory Board, Kathy Cox, 2 years Math Advisory Board GADOE 2013-current Math Resource Revision Team, Coordinate Algebra 2013, GADOE Math Resource Revision Team, Advanced Algebra, 2014 GADOE</p>
<p>Mrs. Pat C Summers</p>	<p>Pat Summers (Georgia) currently serves as an AdvancED Lead Evaluator and Field Consultant for the Georgia Office. She retired as Policy Analyst/Legislative Liaison from the Atlanta Public Schools. She also served as a district administrator in Curriculum and Instruction in addition to serving as the district's SACS liaison. She is an experienced lead evaluator having led numerous accreditation reviews including early learning, school, digital learning, school system, and postsecondary. Additionally, she has had experience providing technical assistance and participating on corporate teams as well as leading special reviews. She also conducts sessions during the annual AdvancED Georgia Fall Conference. Over the years, she has attended AdvancED lead evaluator training and updates, webinars, conferences, council meetings, and field consultant training.</p>

Next Steps

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

About AdvancED

AdvancED is the world leader in providing improvement and accreditation services to education providers of all types in their pursuit of excellence in serving students. AdvancED serves as a trusted partner to more than 32,000 public and private schools and school systems – enrolling more than 20 million students - across the United States and 70 countries.

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) that was founded in 1917 became part of AdvancED.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. The Accreditation Divisions of AdvancED share research-based quality standards that cross school system, state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified and consistent process designed to engage educational institutions in continuous improvement.

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