

# Report of the External Review Team for Treutlen County School System

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# Table of Contents

Introduction ..... 4

Results ..... 9

    Teaching and Learning Impact ..... 9

        Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning ..... 10

        Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement ..... 11

        Student Performance Diagnostic ..... 11

        Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) ..... 13

            eleot™ Data Summary ..... 15

        Findings ..... 18

    Leadership Capacity ..... 20

        Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction ..... 21

        Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership ..... 21

        Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic ..... 22

        Findings ..... 22

    Resource Utilization ..... 24

        Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems ..... 24

        Findings ..... 25

Conclusion ..... 27

    Accreditation Recommendation ..... 29

Addenda ..... 30

    Individual Institution Results (Self-reported) ..... 30

    Team Roster ..... 31

    Next Steps ..... 33

    About AdvancED ..... 34

    References ..... 35

# 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

Prior to arriving for the on-site review, the External Review Team began its work with a conference call to ensure that each member was aware of and in-sync with all of the requirements for participating in and conducting the External Review. The Lead Evaluator explained the composition of the Workspace with particular attention being given to the artifacts and other documents placed there to facilitate the review. The Team reviewed the schedule and Team member assignments to make sure that all were well-prepared for the specific work they were to perform. Team members were asked to study the system and school Accreditation Reports with specific attention being given to their Standard assignments.

During the on-site phase of the review, the Team met with central office personnel, school board members, school level administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents and community members. There are two schools in the system, one elementary and one middle-high school all housed under one roof with the media center and cafeteria jointly used. The Team visited both schools where it interviewed the leadership team of each school, spoke informally with randomly selected students and conducted classroom observations.

The External Review Team extends its heartfelt thanks to Treutlen County schools for being well-prepared for the review. The system administered all of the AdvancED surveys and completed reports as required during

the self-assessment process. All aspects of the process including the schedule and related logistics were thoughtfully planned and well executed. Travel arrangements, housing and hospitality were excellent which made the Team comfortable and able to work effectively. All required documentation/evidence of the Internal Review were available for review in hard-copy format or via the system's website. The Team is most appreciative for the manner in which stakeholders responded to questions and requests for additional information; in doing so, the system demonstrated its commitment to transparency and the accreditation process.

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	6
Instructional Staff	15
Support Staff	2
Students	15
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

# 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.	2.40	2.69
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	2.55
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.20	2.54
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.20	2.70
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	1.80	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.60	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.20	2.67

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.	3.00	2.97
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.	2.00	2.46
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.	3.00	2.57
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.60	2.60
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	1.80	2.63

### 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.	3.20	2.67
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.	2.80	2.48
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	2.20	2.14
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.	2.00	2.45
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.	2.60	2.85

### 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

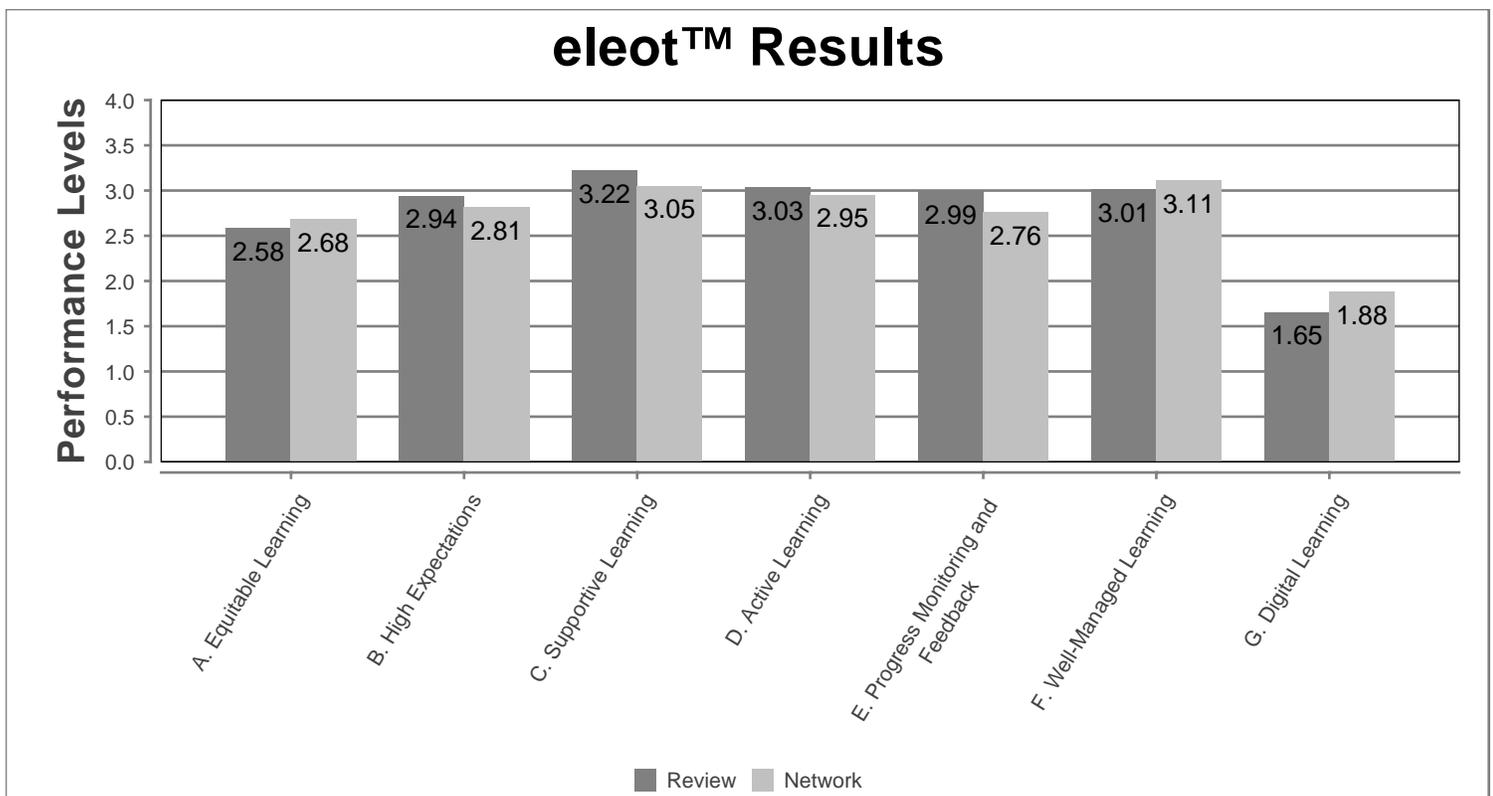
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	2.60	
Test Administration	3.20	3.62
Equity of Learning	2.20	2.52
Quality of Learning	2.80	3.06

## 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.



The External Review Team visited two schools and conducted observations in 46 classrooms. Based on those observations, the Supportive Learning Environment received the highest rating of 3.22 which ranks .17 of a point above the AdvancED Network (AEN) average of 3.05. The next highest rated environment was the Active Learning Environment with a rating of 3.03 which ranks .08 of a point above the AEN average of 2.95. Following closely behind was the Well-Managed Learning Environment with a rating of 3.01 which ranks .10 of

a point below the AEN average of 3.11. Progress Monitoring received a rating of 2.99 which ranks .23 of a point above the AEN average of 2.76. The High Expectations Environment with a rating of 2.94 ranks .13 of a point above the AEN average of 2.81 while the Equitable Learning Environment received a rating of 2.58 ranking .10 of a point below the AEN average 2.68. The Digital Learning Environment received a rating of 1.65 which falls below the AEN average of 1.88 by .23 of a point.

Of particular note are the Supportive Learning Environment, Active Learning Environment and the Progress Monitoring Environments where the system's ratings exceeded the AEN average. Even though all classrooms in the schools were equipped with a Promethean board, document cameras, digital teacher workstations and a few computers in some classrooms for student use. The Team noted little to no students being engaged in a hands-on manner with digital technologies. According to one stakeholder group, one high school class is experimenting with BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) which allows students to use their digital devices to engage in learning activities. Having all of these technologies is an example of the system's commitment to providing resources needed in a 21st Century learning environment.

The overall tenor of the classroom environments can be described as being well-managed, supportive, active and equipped with an above average amount of digital learning devices. While examining the Equitable Learning Environment the Team noted a lack of ample opportunities for students to learn about their own and others backgrounds, cultures, or differences and a lack of differentiated learning opportunities especially at the middle and high school levels.

**eleot™ Data Summary**

<b>A. Equitable Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	2.00	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	10.87%	30.43%	6.52%	52.17%
2.	3.33	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	50.00%	32.61%	17.39%	0.00%
3.	2.96	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	41.30%	28.26%	15.22%	15.22%
4.	2.04	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	15.22%	19.57%	19.57%	45.65%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.58</b>						

<b>B. High Expectations</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.30	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	47.83%	36.96%	13.04%	2.17%
2.	3.09	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	39.13%	30.43%	30.43%	0.00%
3.	2.46	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	30.43%	13.04%	28.26%	28.26%
4.	2.89	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	32.61%	32.61%	26.09%	8.70%
5.	2.96	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	36.96%	30.43%	23.91%	8.70%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.94</b>						

<b>C. Supportive Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.41	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	52.17%	36.96%	10.87%	0.00%
2.	3.43	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	54.35%	34.78%	10.87%	0.00%
3.	3.17	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	47.83%	26.09%	21.74%	4.35%
4.	3.20	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	43.48%	34.78%	19.57%	2.17%
5.	2.89	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	36.96%	23.91%	30.43%	8.70%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.22</b>						

<b>D. Active Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.04	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	34.78%	41.30%	17.39%	6.52%
2.	2.67	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	32.61%	19.57%	30.43%	17.39%
3.	3.37	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	56.52%	26.09%	15.22%	2.17%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.03</b>						

<b>E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	2.89	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	34.78%	34.78%	15.22%	15.22%
2.	3.15	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	39.13%	41.30%	15.22%	4.35%
3.	3.04	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	30.43%	47.83%	17.39%	4.35%
4.	3.00	Understands how her/his work is assessed	32.61%	43.48%	15.22%	8.70%
5.	2.87	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	30.43%	39.13%	17.39%	13.04%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.99</b>						

<b>F. Well-Managed Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.46	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	52.17%	43.48%	2.17%	2.17%
2.	3.39	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	50.00%	39.13%	10.87%	0.00%
3.	2.76	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	32.61%	32.61%	13.04%	21.74%
4.	2.09	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	15.22%	26.09%	10.87%	47.83%
5.	3.35	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	47.83%	41.30%	8.70%	2.17%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.01</b>						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	1.67	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	13.04%	6.52%	15.22%	65.22%
2.	1.67	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	13.04%	6.52%	15.22%	65.22%
3.	1.61	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	8.70%	8.70%	17.39%	65.22%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.65</b>						

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Develop and implement a comprehensive process for collaborative learning communities to include vertical alignment and planning across grade levels, content areas and other system divisions.  
(Indicator 3.5, Indicator 5.3)

#### Evidence and Rationale

Little to no evidence was presented to show that all system staff participate in collaborative learning environments across grade levels, content areas and other system divisions. Vertical alignment is regarded as a best practice in improving student performance in schools. It ensures what is being taught and tested in the classrooms aligns with the state standards and assessments. It articulates the logical, consistent order for teaching the standards-based content at each grade or course level, which allows teachers to focus on building skills and knowledge while reducing the need for excessive review and repetition.

Teaching is purposefully structured and logically sequenced so that students are acquiring knowledge and developing skills that will prepare them for more challenging higher-level work.

### Improvement Priority

Revisit and revise the system's procedures for providing services to identified gifted and talented students.  
(Indicator 3.12)

#### Evidence and Rationale

During interviews with various stakeholder groups it was revealed that there are a limited number of gifted and talented students being identified and served in both schools. A perception exists that high school gifted

students are reluctant to receive services because of the way the delivery model is implemented. Implementation of this improvement priority will ensure that the specific learning needs of identified gifted and talented students are being met. It could also increase participation in the Accel Program and Dual Enrollment programs of the system. In addition, there will be implications for additional funding from the state.

### **Opportunity For Improvement**

Develop, implement and evaluate structures in both schools that provide for long-term interaction with individual students that build strong relationships over time between students and school personnel.

(Indicator 3.9)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

A review of artifacts and discussions with students revealed little to no evidence of a systemic structure whereby students are individually assigned to school personnel for guidance and support. All stakeholder groups described the system as being a family where all come together to help those students in need; however, the External Review Team found no formal advocacy structures in place to build long-term interaction and strong relationships between students and school personnel. A student having the advocacy of school personnel benefits academically, socially and emotionally. School personnel gain significant insight into a student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills and life skills.

### **Opportunity For Improvement**

Expand training to all professional and support staff in the evaluation, interpretation and use of data.

(Indicator 5.3)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

The system has made a commitment to provide teachers with professional learning to enhance instructional practices and has provided some training in this area. However, the Accreditation Report indicates a need for training in the use of data to drive instruction. Consistent collection and analysis of student achievement aids in determining specific foci for professional learning. With the implementation of school improvement plans, common practices for analyzing, interpreting and using data must be developed. The requirement of differentiated instruction and the multi-tiered support system make it necessary for teachers to have strong data interpretation skills. Consistent collection and analysis of data is vital to trend analysis used to evaluate progress in achieving school and system goals.

# 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.	1.80	2.67
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.	2.20	2.69
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.	2.40	2.87
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.	2.40	2.64

## 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.	2.60	2.96
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	2.00	2.99
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.	2.40	3.20
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	2.60	3.00
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	2.40	2.69

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.	2.60	2.78

## 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	3.00	3.43
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00	3.12

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Develop and implement a structure whereby the board acts to police itself to ensure that it remains in compliance with its policy and state board rules regarding non-interference of individual board members in the day-to-day operations of the system and its schools.

(Indicator 2.2)

#### Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with various stakeholders revealed a concern regarding undue interference in the operations of schools by some board members. It is important for the governing body to maintain its role as a policy making body and be mindful of actions that may cross the line of governance and move into the realm of management. In doing so, the board will remain in compliance with state board rules and its own policy regarding the autonomy of school administration. Additionally it will allow school officials to conduct business without undue oversight of policy makers and fear of reprisal.

### Improvement Priority

Follow local school board rule and Georgia Code regarding residency requirements for being a member of a

local board of education.  
(Indicator 2.2)

*Evidence and Rationale*

During an interview with a stakeholder and subsequent validation with the system it was found that a school board member moved to another residence and no longer resides in the district he was elected to represent. The school board policy BBAA states, in part: "Each member of the Board shall be at least twenty-one years of age and shall reside within the respective district at the time he/she qualified to run." The Georgia Code 20-2-51 (b) states: "Whenever a member of a local board of education moves that person's domicile from the district which that person represents, such person shall cease to be a member of such local board of education, and a vacancy shall occur. The member shall provide notice of such move to the secretary of the local board of education and the election superintendent within ten days of such move."

School boards are held to high standards regarding the application of its rules, state board of education rules, and law. It is incumbent of the board to ensure that it meets all requirements of rules and law regarding every facet of the system. In doing so, it demonstrates the integrity within which the board operates.

**Improvement Priority**

Update the system's strategic/continuous improvement plan to represent the current values, shared beliefs of stakeholders and direction of the system with a common Vision and Mission Statement that reflects 21st Century teaching and learning needs.

(Indicator 1.1)

*Evidence and Rationale*

The system's strategic/continuous improvement plan was last revisited during the 2010 school year as it prepared for its first system accreditation review. The External Review Team found no evidence of the plan being revisited, updated and readopted since that time. A strategic/continuous improvement plan is the system's process that defines its direction and strategies while making decisions relative to the allocation of resources to pursue those strategies and direction. It is imperative that the plan remains current to reflect the ever-changing needs and conditions of the system. If carefully crafted, the plan will provide the foundation upon which monitoring and evaluation of its effectiveness can take place and ensure its relevance to the continuous improvement needs of the system.

# 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.	2.80	2.98
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.	2.80	2.98
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	2.80	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.	2.20	2.67

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.	2.60	2.82
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	3.00	2.64
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.	3.20	2.65
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.	1.80	2.64

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Realign the duties and responsibilities of guidance counselors to allow for additional opportunities for counseling individual and small groups of students. As a part of the realignment, establish a formal process for referring students for guidance services.

(Indicator 4.8)

#### Evidence and Rationale

Through interviews and discussions with staff it was noted that counselors spend a large amount of time as testing coordinators with implementation of pre and post assessments such as SLO, benchmark testing and Georgia Milestones. In addition, they oversee the administration of student surveys leaving them with limited time for individual, small group guidance sessions and classroom instruction. Realigning duties of the counselors should provide more opportunities for counseling sessions with students. Additionally, consideration should be given to the use of non-certificated personnel to handle the clerical aspects of test coordination.

### Powerful Practice

The “Backpack Kids Program” provides food on weekends and holidays to needy students and is supported financially through donations from various entities of the community.

(Indicator 4.7)

#### Evidence and Rationale

A review of the Accreditation Report and discussions with various stakeholder groups revealed the implementation of a program that supplies non-perishable food items to students that have a demonstrated need for assistance. This commendable program contributes to the physical and emotional well-being of students and their families and is an illustration of how the school and its community come together as a family to provide services to students and families in need.



# Conclusion

The school system spoke very highly of the opportunities it provides for students through dual enrollment, Advanced Placement Course offerings, the Accel Program and opportunities which could lead to students receiving an Associate's Degree while in high school. The Team noted opportunities for students to pursue Career Technical and Agriculture Education (CTAE) certification in a joint venture with three other Georgia school systems (Montgomery County School District, Toombs County School District and Vidalia City School District) and Southeastern Technical College to form an educational partnership known as Southeastern Early College and Career Academy (SECCA). Students enroll to take high school and college courses that are directly relevant to their career aspirations. Participation in some of these courses could lead to industry certification.

Interviews with stakeholder groups revealed support for the leadership of the system. However, many felt that some board members occasionally cross the line of governance and move into the realm of administration which creates undue stress on schools and administrators and sends mixed messages.

One of the major challenges of the system is that of closing the achievement gap between students with disabilities and white students. The system recognizes the need to close this gap and is implementing several strategies to that effect. The implementation and expansion of professional learning to include Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with a major focus on individual student performance and the use of data in the vertical alignment and planning processes across all content areas is a challenge that deserves specific attention. The system's strategic plan is in need of revision to reflect the current realities of the system. Plans are underway to begin that process prior to the beginning of the ensuing school year.

A strategic emphasis on addressing these challenges with a focus on individual and overall student achievement is critical to improved student achievement in the core academic areas. The human, physical and intellectual resources are present in the system to effectively address these challenges. Using the improvement priorities and opportunities for improvement outlined by the Team can serve as a guide to more effective continuous improvement in the system.

## 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 comprehensive process for collaborative learning communities to include vertical alignment and planning across grade levels, content areas and other system divisions.
- Develop and implement a structure whereby the board acts to police itself to ensure that it remains in compliance with its policy and state board rules regarding non-interference of individual board members in the day-to-day operations of the system and its schools.
- Follow local school board rule and Georgia Code regarding residency requirements for being a member of a local board of education.

- Realign the duties and responsibilities of guidance counselors to allow for additional opportunities for counseling individual and small groups of students. As a part of the realignment, establish a formal process for referring students for guidance services.
- Revisit and revise the system's procedures for providing services to identified gifted and talented students.
- Update the system's strategic/continuous improvement plan to represent the current values, shared beliefs of stakeholders and direction of the system with a common Vision and Mission Statement that reflects 21st Century teaching and learning needs.

# 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	248.78	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	244.76	274.14
Leadership Capacity	245.00	296.08
Resource Utilization	265.00	286.32

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
Treutlen Elementary School	257.14	245.45	257.14	253.85
Treutlen Middle/High School	252.38	254.55	271.43	256.41

# Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Dr. James W Brown</p>	<p>Dr. James W. Brown is a graduate of Florida A and M University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education and a Master of Education in Guidance Services. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Florida State University in the area of Educational Management Systems. He has held employment as a music teacher/band director in Nassau and Gadsden counties in Florida. He also served as a visiting professor at the graduate level in the College of Education at Florida State University. Administrative positions held include curriculum coordinator, assessment coordinator, assistant principal, assistant superintendent for employee relations, assistant superintendent for academic services, and deputy superintendent of schools in the Gadsden School District. He began his association with SACS in the early 1970s serving on school visiting committees and later chairing school visits. He has continued that association to the present time where he is a member of the SACS CASI Florida Council. He is an AdvancED Lead Evaluator and Special Reviewer and has led numerous district and school external reviews. Even though retired, he continues his association with schools and school districts throughout the United States as a consultant for school improvement, organizational development, program evaluation, efficiency reviews, and other areas of educational leadership.</p>
<p>Dr. Cemond Thaddeus Robinzine</p>	<p>Cemond Robinzine has worked in the field of education for eighteen years. He has educational experience on the elementary, middle, and high school level. He is currently an elementary school principal for the Henry County Schools System. He has also served as an assistant principal, school improvement specialist, and special education teacher.</p>
<p>Dr. Edlow Barker</p>	<p>Edlow Barker lives in Richmond, Virginia, with his wife Carolyn. Together, they have three children and five grandchildren. His professional work includes extensive experience as assistant superintendent for instruction, director of instruction, principal (elementary, middle, and high), assistant principal, teacher, and coach. His experience is primarily in Virginia, but includes two years as director in a multi-national private school in Cali, Colombia, South America. He earned his Bachelor's Degree from Wake Forest University, the Master's Degree from the University of Virginia, and the Doctoral Degree from Virginia Tech. Additional coursework was taken at Norfolk State University and the University of Alabama. He has taught numerous graduate courses for the University of Virginia and Radford University. Related leadership activities include development of educational foundations in two public school districts, development of a regional academic competition league for high schools, Chairman of the Virginia High School League, and development of a regional Governor's School program for gifted students. He has served on and chaired numerous accreditation committees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Virginia Department of Education, and AdvancED.</p>
<p>Dr. Marvin Howard</p>	<p>Marvin Howard currently serves as Superintendent of Randolph County Schools in Cuthbert, Ga. During his professional tenure he has held positions as a teacher in Telfair County, Assistant Principal of Hawkinsville High School, Director of an Alternative School, Assistant Principal of Bradwell Institute, Principal of Montgomery County Middle School as well as a high school basketball coach. Dr. Howard has coached football, track, and softball. He also has previous experience as a member of SACS External Review Teams.</p>

Member	Brief Biography
Mr. Chalmus Thomas	<p>Chalmus is a graduate of Florida A and M University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Physical Education and a Master in Educational Administration. Administrative positions held include Curriculum Coordinator, Assistant Principal, and Principal. Even though retired, he continues his association with schools as a Consultant and Mentor.</p>
Dr. Jameson Travick	<p>Dr. Jameson Travick currently serves the Laurens County School District as Associate Superintendent of Schools, and of the many areas he oversees include: district-wide Career, Technical, and Ag. Education (CTAE), Curriculum for grades 6-12, Migrant Education, ESOL Education , and Gifted Education programs.</p> <p>Dr. Travick has spent most of his life seeking knowledge and sharing in learning. He has earned a Bachelor' degree in Secondary Education; a Master's degree in Middle Grades Education; an Education Specialist Degree in Middle Grades Education; and a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership. Dr. Travick has served in education for over 21 years with the majority of his service in schools working directly with teachers and students either at the high school level or in post secondary at either the technical college or one of the regional private colleges.</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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