

Report of the  
External Review  
for  
Butts County School System

181 North Mulberry Street  
Jackson, GA, 30233-0819  
US

Mr. Robert Costley, Superintendent

Date: February 23, 2014 - February 26, 2014



*North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.*

Copyright ©2013 by Advance Education, Inc. AdvancED grants to the Institution, which is the subject of the External Review Team Report, and its designees and stakeholders a non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free license and release to reproduce, reprint, and distribute this report in accordance with and as protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States of America and all foreign countries. All other rights not expressly conveyed are reserved by AdvancED.

# Table of Contents

Introduction to the External Review .....	1
Part I: Findings .....	2
Accreditation Standards and Indicators .....	2
Learning Environment .....	24
Student Performance .....	25
Stakeholder Feedback .....	26
Individual Institution Results .....	27
Part II: Conclusion .....	28
Summary of the External Review .....	28
Required Action .....	34
Part III: Addenda .....	35
The External Review Team .....	35
Next Steps .....	36
Celebrating Accreditation .....	37
About AdvancED .....	37
References .....	38

## Introduction to the External Review

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

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

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

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

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

## Part I: Findings

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

### Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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

This section contains an evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, identification of Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards (if appropriate), and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review Team.

The AdvancED Standards and Indicators are the first of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Using indicator-specific performance levels, the External Review Team evaluates the degree to which the institution meets each indicator on a scale of 1 to 4. The scores assigned to the indicators are averaged to arrive at a single score. This score, along with scores from evaluations of student performance and stakeholder feedback, will be used to determine the accreditation status of the institution.

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	2.66
--	------

***Standard 1: 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.***

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 30,000 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.

Standard 1
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		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Governing body policies, procedures, and practices</li> <li>• District purpose statements - past and present</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders</li> <li>• Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook)</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Minutes from meetings related to development of the district's purpose and direction</li> <li>• Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the district's purpose</li> </ul>	3.0
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements</li> <li>• Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders about educational programs and equitable learning experiences</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs</li> <li>• Statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning</li> <li>• The district strategic plan</li> </ul>	3.0
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Examples of schools continuous improvement plans</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings</li> <li>• Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders</li> <li>• The district data profile</li> <li>• The district strategic plan</li> </ul>	2.0

**Opportunities for Improvement****Indicator**

1. Develop and implement a systemic process that will ensure that all stakeholder groups are engaged in authentic and meaningful ways.

1.4

Butts County School System has increased the venues and participation of stakeholder involvement. As evidenced by interviews and artifacts, however, the level of involvement by all stakeholder groups is not consistent and pervasive throughout the system. Participation by all stakeholder groups in a systematic continuous improvement process was not observed.

All stakeholder groups working collaboratively and consistently in authentic and meaningful ways builds and sustains ownership of the system's purpose and provides direction to improve student learning and the conditions that support learning.

**Standard 2: The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system 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 2			
The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Professional development plans</li> <li>• Student handbooks</li> <li>• Staff handbooks</li> <li>• District operations manuals</li> <li>• Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions</li> <li>• School handbooks</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governing authority minutes relating to training</li> <li>• Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest</li> <li>• List of assigned staff for compliance</li> <li>• Proof of legal counsel</li> <li>• Governing authority training plan</li> <li>• Assurances, certifications</li> <li>• Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies</li> <li>• Historical compliance data</li> <li>• Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest</li> <li>• Governing code of ethics</li> </ul>	3.0
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications regarding governing authority actions</li> <li>• District strategic plan</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of school leadership</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of district leadership</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Survey results regarding functions of the governing authority and operations of the district</li> <li>• Stakeholder input and feedback</li> <li>• Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation</li> <li>• Agendas and minutes of meetings</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan</li> <li>• Professional development offerings and plans</li> <li>• Examples of collaboration and shared leadership</li> <li>• Examples of decisions aligned with the school's purpose statement</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans</li> <li>• Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs</li> <li>• Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction</li> </ul>	3.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes from meetings with stakeholders</li> <li>• Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys</li> <li>• Survey responses</li> <li>• Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan</li> <li>• Communication plan</li> <li>• Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation</li> <li>• Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation</li> <li>• Job specific criteria</li> <li>• Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice throughout the system and student success noted</li> <li>• Representative supervision and evaluation reports</li> </ul>	3.0

**Powerful Practices****Indicator**

1. Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.

2.4

The Butts County School Board of Education is aligned and unified regarding its mission and vision. Board members do an outstanding job of understanding and remaining true to their roles. The board protects the autonomy of district and school level administrators and does not interfere with day-to-day operations. Staff members at all schools "own" the system mission, vision and strategic goals.

Fostering a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction has a direct impact on the teaching and learning occurring within the system.

**Standard 3: The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.**

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 to their highest potential and be prepared for a successful future. The positive influence an effective educator has on learning is a combination of "student motivation, parental involvement" and the "quality of leadership" (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Research also suggests that quality educators must have a variety of quantifiable and intangible characteristics 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.

Standard 3			
The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Course, program, or school schedules</li> <li>• Student work across courses or programs</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Lesson plans</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Posted learning objectives</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common assessments</li> <li>• Surveys results</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices</li> <li>• Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum</li> </ul>	3.0
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource</li> <li>• Findings from supervisor formal and informal observations</li> <li>• Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool</li> <li>• Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge</li> <li>• Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision and evaluation procedures</li> <li>• Documentation of collection of lesson plans, grade books, or other data record systems</li> <li>• Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions</li> <li>• Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices</li> <li>• Surveys results</li> <li>• Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Common language, protocols and reporting tools</li> <li>• Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees</li> <li>• Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Professional development funding to promote professional learning communities</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Peer coaching guidelines and procedures</li> <li>• Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning</li> <li>• Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration</li> <li>• Examples of cross curricular or program projects, interdisciplinary instruction, and classroom action research projects</li> </ul>	3.0
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning</li> </ul>	2.0
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records of meetings and informal feedback sessions</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff</li> </ul>	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Volunteer program with variety of options for participation</li> <li>• List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	2.0
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum and activities of structures for adults advocating on behalf of students</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>	2.0
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• District quality control procedures including the monitoring of grading practices across all schools</li> <li>• Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting</li> </ul>	2.0
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District professional development plan involving the district and all schools</li> <li>• Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs</li> <li>• Crosswalk between professional learning and district purpose and direction</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• List of learning support services and student population served by such services</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning</li> <li>• Data used to identify unique learning needs of students</li> </ul>	2.0

### ***Powerful Practices***

### ***Indicator***

1. The system has adopted student achievement and success as its major strategic goal and is working as an effective collaborative learning organization to support improved instruction and student learning at all levels across the district.

3.5

The system has created a culture of continuous professional learning which provides a platform for collaboration of staff both formally and informally. This collaboration is within and across grade levels and includes various departments within the school district. It is the expectation of the system that all leaders in every department participate in professional development which is job-embedded and performance-oriented. Frequent and ongoing discussion of student performance and progress occurs throughout the system as evidenced in artifacts and stakeholder interviews. Student learning needs are addressed following discussions which focus on artifacts that include student work, progress monitoring documents, reflection on instructional practice, and the use of peer coaching as it impacts student learning and achievement. Personnel confirm the effectiveness of such practices through review of student performance data which show steady gains toward achievement goals and in uniformity in embracing strategic goals for the district.

The adoption of student achievement and success as the major goal has guided the system to implement initiatives which have resulted in improving student achievement.

**Opportunities for Improvement****Indicator**

1. Design, implement and evaluate a systematic structured program for use in all Butts County 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.

3.9

After reviewing artifacts and interviewing stakeholders, the team found that no formal structure exists to ensure that each student is provided an adult advocate at their school who supports that student's educational experience.

A system-wide expectation to provide each student an adult advocate within each school is critical to ensuring that no child is allowed to "slip through the cracks." Only through such interaction over time can a strong relationship be established.

**Standard 4: The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.**

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 30,000 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. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools</li> <li>• System's Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District quality assurance procedures showing district oversight of schools pertaining to school resources</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources</li> <li>• Examples of school calendars</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction</li> <li>• Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction</li> <li>• District strategic plan showing resources support for district</li> </ul>	2.0
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Example systems for school maintenance requests</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements</li> <li>• Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments</li> <li>• Example maintenance schedules for schools</li> <li>• School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems</li> <li>• District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities, learning environments</li> <li>• Evaluation results of the effectiveness of the district strategic plan or indicators of changes resulting in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategic plan</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>	3.0
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Evaluation procedures and results of education resources</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level</li> <li>• District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level</li> <li>• District quality control procedures that monitor the effectiveness of technology services at the district-level and school-level</li> <li>• Assessments to inform development of district and school technology plans</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>	3.0
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills</li> <li>• Rubrics on developmentally appropriate benchmarks; e.g. early childhood education</li> <li>• Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education</li> </ul>	3.0
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning</li> <li>• Description of IEP process</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Description of referral process</li> </ul>	3.0

**Standard 5: 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.**

Systems 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.

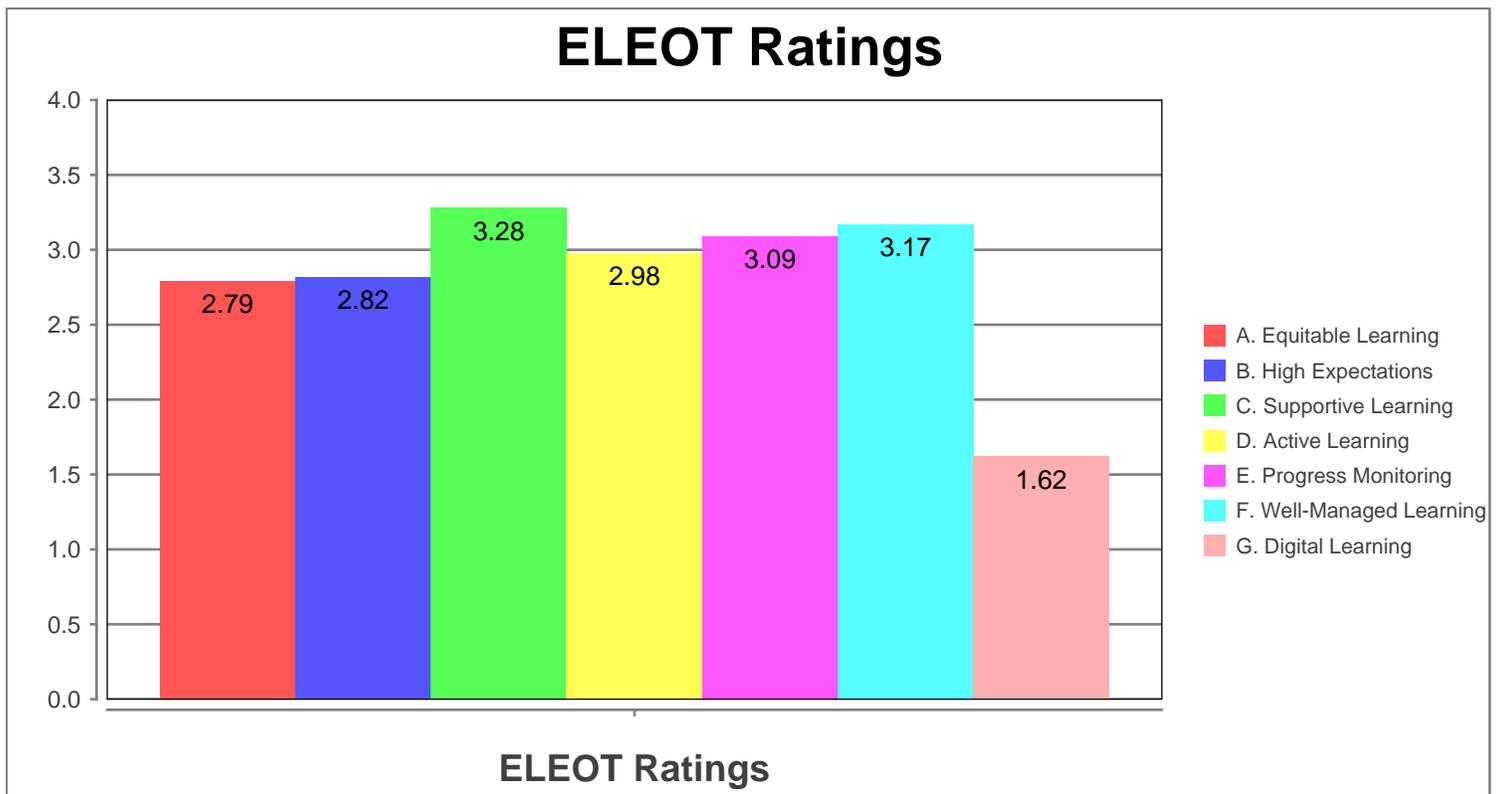
Standard 5			
The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local or school assessments on student learning and school performance</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> </ul>	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning</li> </ul>	2.0
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	2.0
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data</li> <li>• Evidence of student readiness for the next level</li> <li>• Evidence of student growth</li> <li>• Evidence of student success at the next level</li> </ul>	3.0
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement</li> <li>• Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	3.0

## Learning Environment

Every learner should have access to an effective learning environment in which she/he has multiple opportunities to be successful. The Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and 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. External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.



## Student Performance

Student Performance on assessments is the second of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze student performance data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the assessments used by the institution, the degree to which the institution properly administered the assessments, analyzed and acted on the results, and the overall performance of students using a set of rubrics. Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Student Performance Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Assessment Quality	4.0
Test Administration	4.0
Quality of Learning	3.0
Equity of Learning	2.0

## Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys are directly correlated to the AdvancED Accreditation 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 and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Stakeholder Feedback Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Questionnaire Administration	4.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	4.0

## Individual Institution Results

AdvancED requires internal and external stakeholders from each individual institution within the system to evaluate their institution on the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools, student performance, and stakeholder feedback. The following table provides the results of those self-analyses. Higher scores indicate higher perceived performance on each of the measures. The range of possible scores for each of the institutions within the system are 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing).

Institution	Indicator Averages	Questionnaire Administration	Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	Assessment Quality	Test Administration	Quality of Learning	Equity of Learning
Daughtry Elementary School	2.8	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Henderson Middle School	3.0	4.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0
Jackson Elementary School	2.95	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	2.0
Jackson High School	2.67	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Stark Elementary School	3.04	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	2.0

## Part II: Conclusion

### *Summary of the External Review*

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

The team met in the hotel conference room on February 23, 2014, at 4 pm. A dinner, provided from 6:30 to 7:30 pm, included school board members, school principals, district staff and the district superintendent. Team assignments were completed in the hotel conference room on Sunday and Monday nights and in the system office on Tuesday night.

Butts County School System is located in a rural community in central Georgia, 45 minutes south of downtown Atlanta. The system has dealt with austerity cuts from the state since 2002. Compounded by the loss of industry and lowered property income, budget deficits have resulted in many positions and programs being cut or greatly reduced in number.

For the past three school years, the system made significant leadership shifts. In 2011 and 2012, many changes in the central office occurred as a result of reorganization, retirements and new appointments. During that time, two new school board members were elected to the five-member board of education. Principal changes began in 2011 with the transferring of the principal from the middle school to the high school. By the 2013-2014 school year, all schools had changed principals.

In the Accreditation Report the system stated that the proudest area of accomplishment in the last three years is student achievement, clearly the priority focus of the system. After reviewing feedback from system stakeholders and reviewing student data in 2011, the district implemented strategies to improve student achievement with an intentional focus on professional development and collaboration. Test scores have increased at all levels across the system. Jackson High School posted some of the highest test scores in the history of the school. System personnel were quick to say that there is great pride associated with the increase in test scores but noted, "We are not there yet."

The system was well-prepared for the review after conducting a thorough Internal Review process that yielded the Accreditation Report and other documents, all provided ahead of time to the team. As the review continued, the system showed transparency and honesty in all reporting.

The team conducted 281 interviews of stakeholders who were interviewed in a variety of settings including those appearing on the schedule as well as others in spontaneous encounters in school hallways and classrooms. Thirty six administrators, 107 teachers, five support staff, 106 students and 27 parents were interviewed under the new AdvancED protocol that provides for flexibility and spontaneity in interview settings. In addition, 41 classroom observations utilizing the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool (ELEOT) were conducted. The number of observations permitted the team to develop a comprehensive picture of learning across classrooms in the district. A team member also met with a school staff member to review the early childhood Standard Four in each

elementary school.

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

There are five AdvancED standards for quality school systems. Within those five standards are 35 indicators which provide clarifying language. The team examined artifacts, participated in staff presentations, interviewed stakeholders and observed classrooms to assess the level of adherence by individual schools and the school district to each of the 35 indicators.

Following lengthy discussion of the evidence, collective agreement was reached on a rating of each indicator using the AdvancED rating rubric. Additionally, the team developed statements which highlight noteworthy observations and actions that yield significant results in student achievement or organizational effectiveness. The statements are known as Powerful Practices and are described in greater detail in the Standards section of this report. Likewise, statements were developed for areas that are worthy of attention by the district for needed improvement or areas in which the district is not as effective as it could be in meeting the accreditation standards. Greater detail for these statements, known as Opportunities for Improvement or Required Actions, is provided elsewhere in this report. That additional clarification identifies the evidence on which the team based its findings and the rationale for why the team believes the recommendation is important.

The system did an in-depth self-reflection using the AdvancED standards. The team reviewed, discussed and considered the performance levels of every standard indicator during all three work sessions. The final ratings matched all but three of those submitted by the system.

The Vision and Mission statements, which have existed for many years, are, "A community where education is a priority" and "To provide an environment where students and adults expect more and become more," frequently referred to as expect more...become more. A recent review of the vision and mission statements with the stakeholders determined that the statements remain viable. Seven belief statements were developed to clarify expectations for students and staff. Three system-wide goals (better known as SOAR) were added and have become the "big buckets" of strategic planning and implementation at all levels. SOAR provides for balanced management as follows:

- Excellence in
- Student Achievement and Success
- Organizational Effectiveness
- Relationships and Perceptions

Three large community "Summits" were held involving district and school personnel, parents, business owners, government officials and civic clubs to develop The Butts County Strategic Plan (BCSP). Schools held similar retreats to develop plans that mirrored the system plan. All stakeholder groups were knowledgeable about the vision, mission and SOAR.

During the superintendent's overview, an update summarized how the system followed up on the recommendations in the last review in 2008. Two of the recommendations were to increase stakeholder involvement in district improvement planning and to identify gifted students. For the past few years, school and community groups have been involved in system and school strategic planning. In 2008, the gifted population was 86 full-time equivalent

(FTE). Now, the system has 133 gifted FTE, and has a smaller, overall student population.

Although there has been an increase in stakeholder involvement, the team did not observe that all stakeholder groups are engaged in authentic and meaningful ways. All stakeholder groups must be involved in the systemic improvement process to develop ownership, make valuable contributions, acquire trust and share common expectations that can serve as a basis to move forward.

Artifacts provided to the team and interviews with board members indicate how the board sets policy and direction for the district as well as how the board supports district and school administrators. The Self-Assessment committee found that the board performed at a high level and was exemplary in ensuring that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively. School leaders interviewed agreed with the committee's findings. The board is aligned and unified regarding the mission and vision of the system. Board members are regularly trained in responsibilities and roles and adhere to standards and ethics that promote efficient operation and guidance for the district.

As confirmed through artifacts and interviews, the team found that leaders and staff throughout the system align decisions and actions in efforts toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. The superintendent's cabinet meets with principals on a regular basis. The principals, with input from school staff, submit a 40-day report to the superintendent that entails the cascading responsibilities and accountabilities of each school. All leaders throughout the system actively and consistently support and encourage collaboration and professional growth. Elementary personnel commented on the opportunity for all teachers to meet by grade level to collaborate to develop a unified curriculum and assessment process. Time is provided for staff to participate in a multitude of professional growth opportunities.

Recent revisions in and focus on the purpose and direction of the system provide opportunities for teacher growth, instructional improvement and increased student achievement. Implementation and support of a wide variety of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate during common planning times and to base interventions on analysis of data. The initial foundation of data analysis to drive continuous improvement processes has been established through PLCs and Response to Intervention (RTI) implementation. In particular, the steering committee, comprised of district staff, principals, assistant principals, teacher support specialists and teachers, has been particularly powerful in strategic planning, preparing for the External Review, guiding district school improvement plans, dissemination of data and supporting the system's focus that facilitated the successful accreditation visit.

Although the system takes great pride in the increased student achievement, the continued emphasis "expect more and become more" has led to the implementation of programs and strategies to continue the growth and meet the needs of all students. Artifacts and interviews highlighted the successful use of several. Some examples that contribute to overall system strengths are alignment of instruction, use of data, couplet days, Authentic Literacy, Data Director, increased offerings in the high school, professional development, common planning, and district and school walk-throughs.

Interviews revealed that mentoring, coaching and induction programs are available in some schools. The system listed such professional development as an area that needs improvement and teachers agreed. A system-wide program would ensure that personnel are engaged in activities consistent with the system's values and beliefs

about teaching, learning and the conditions that support learning.

The team found that the school system provides and supports various initiatives that assist and support many but not all students. Some schools have organized advocacy programs more formally than others, but no system-wide structure appears to exist. A system-wide structure should be developed to ensure each student is well-known by at least one adult.

Governing board policies and procedures are in place to support the hiring, placement, professional development and retention of highly-qualified professionals. Austerity cuts created a need to fill teaching positions with remaining staff not certified in the needed areas. Eight teachers are not highly-qualified. No further positions will be filled unless the candidate is highly-qualified.

Austerity cuts created the need to shorten the school calendar from 180 to 161 school days. Students now attend school an extra 20 minutes each day to make up the instructional time.

The facilities are very well-maintained while on a frequently reduced budget. The board enacted a referendum, passed in 2012, to offset the crisis. The Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (E-SPLOST) provided a penny sales tax to improve facilities. The funds financed an addition to Jackson High School and facilities maintenance repairs and equipment.

Great concentration and effort have focused on technology as a means to support instruction and services across the district. Classroom observations and interviews with stakeholders provided descriptive data on improvements in infrastructure related to technology access and on the current technology plan overall. According to interviews, the new technology director has been a great asset to the system as has the additional equipment provided with E-SPLOST funds.

The team observed that many resource programs are in place. However, the team did not see an evaluation component to determine the impact of all aspects of the organization on student achievement.

The team found that the system is in the process of establishing a comprehensive student assessment system. Data were available from Georgia-mandated assessments which include comprehensive and end-of-course tests as well as universal screening tools such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). The system is in the process of creating formative assessments. Teachers and administrators at the elementary schools stated that all three schools were working collaboratively to create district-level formative assessments. Middle and high school personnel reported using Data Director to create common assessments.

During the system presentation, the deputy superintendent stated that the system needs to provide more rigorous professional development on the interpretation of data. Artifacts and interviews confirmed that while training on the use of data has occurred, the district still needs to provide comprehensive professional learning to the staff on the interpretation and use of data.

A process of analyzing student achievement data is evidenced by the system and schools' strategic plans, stakeholder interviews and artifacts. Teachers at the high school said data were used in the creation of daily lesson plans. Data rooms were visible at elementary schools. Results indicate significant student academic growth

over the last three years. Strategic plans center on student performance. System and school leaders regularly communicate with stakeholders by providing information on student learning, school performance and the achievement of system and school improvement goals.

The team did not see a systematic process for program evaluation for the system. With the onset of many programs and initiatives and limited resources, system and school personnel should be able to use data to evaluate and determine which programs and initiatives are most effective to continue to attain the high expectations and goals of the system.

As the team deliberated over the ratings on the standard indicators, the team concurred with all but one of the system's ratings of 2s. Some of the 2s received Opportunities for Improvement or Required Actions. Through artifacts and interviews, the team determined that the system had action plans already in place for many of them. Some examples are conducting data workshops, developing formative assessments and having all highly-qualified staff.

***During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.***

The team used ELEOT to observe the learning processes. The following statements are overall generalizations drawn from 41 classroom observations.

- Strong, positive interactions occur between students and teachers
- Students know the assignment and what they are to do
- Differentiation is not consistent across the system
- The use of higher order thinking skills was not consistent across the system
- Exemplars are employed but on a limited basis
- Students interact respectfully with school personnel and peers
- Learning environments are friendly, welcoming and well-maintained
- Pockets of excellence appear in student engagement
- Technology is used but on a limited basis

Conversations with students in the classrooms helped the team to understand how highly they regard their teachers and how hard they will work to achieve learning goals. Butts County classrooms are very conducive to high-level learning.

The team extends thanks to the superintendent and deputy superintendent for curriculum and instruction for facilitating a very successful External Review process and for the outstanding hospitality provided to the team. The team visited the district on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, following a lengthy Sunday work session. Throughout the visit, the team found all staff members, students and parents to be very professional and genuinely interested in and supportive of the team's work. .

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 criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED is introducing a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduces an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; 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.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and Indicators; the Analysis of Student Performance; and the Engagement and Involvement of Stakeholders. Within each domain institutions will be able to 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 can be a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Required Action as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected Indicator.

The IEQ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. Your institution's IEQ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Your actions for improvement that have a positive impact will be reflected in your IEQ score.

IEQ Institutional Score: 278

Teaching and Learning Impact: 262  
(Standards 3 and 5; Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 308  
(Standards 1 and 2; Stakeholder Engagement Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 275  
(Standard 4)

The External Review team recommends that Butts County School System be accredited by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission for a five-year term of accreditation.

## Required Action

1. Develop and implement a mentoring, coaching and induction program that is consistent and pervasive across the system.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 3.7

### Description:

Minimal evidence was presented which showed that mentoring, coaching and induction programs that support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning have been implemented uniformly on a system-wide basis. Support systems for new school personnel have not been fully developed and are not consistent across the district. Some schools report a mentoring program for new teachers housed within the school building, but a system-wide induction policy is not in place. Some evidence of mentorship exists in artifacts presented to the team, but those artifacts are applicable to only a few schools in the district.

A consistent support system must be developed and implemented on a system-wide basis to encourage the continued communication of the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning and to ensure that these continue to be maintained with integrity as personnel is added to the school district.

2. Develop and implement system-wide systematic processes for evaluating the the impact of instructional and non-instructional programs on student achievement.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 5.2

### Description:

Observations, stakeholder interviews and a review of system artifacts provided minimal evidence of a systematic process to evaluate instructional and non-instructional programs implemented to determine effectiveness and impact on student learning. Identifying and utilizing comparison and trend data from multiple sources, including locally-developed assessments, will ensure consistent measurement across all classrooms, courses, education programs, and district departments.

Systematic processes of evaluating instructional and non-instructional programs will result in the most effective use of resources to impact student achievement.

## **Part III: Addenda**

### ***The External Review Team***

**Lead Evaluator:**

Dr. Dody W Sapp

**Associate Lead Evaluator:**

Dan Ray

**Reviewer:**

Mrs. Judy S Wesley

**Team Member:**

Dr. Ella Green

Mrs. Patty Robinson

Ms. Valerie Sommerville

## **Next Steps**

The institution should:

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

## ***Celebrating Accreditation***

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

## ***About AdvancED***

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, 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 joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students.

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

## References

- Alwin, L. (2002). The will and the way of data use. *School Administrator*, 59(11), 11.
- Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y. (2010). Teachers' mathematical knowledge, cognitive activation in the classroom, and student progress. *American Educational Research Journal*, 47(1), 133-180.
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. (2012). *Shared purpose: the golden thread?* London: CIPD.
- Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S. (2008). An investigation of the impacts of teacher-driven professional development. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 35(2), 134-154.
- Conley, D.T. (2007). *Redefining college readiness (Vol. 3)*. Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center.
- Datnow, A., Park, V., & Wohlstetter, P. (2007). *Achieving with data: How high-performing school systems use data to improve instruction for elementary students*. Los Angeles, CA: Center on Educational Governance, USC.
- Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R. (2005). *Data driven decision making in Southwestern Pennsylvania school districts*. Working paper. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- Ding, C. & Sherman, H. (2006). Teaching effectiveness and student achievement: Examining the relationship. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 29 (4), 40-51.
- Doyle, D. P. (2003). Data-driven decision making: Is it the mantra of the month or does it have staying power? *T.H.E. Journal*, 30(10), 19-21.
- Feuerstein, A., & Opfer, V. D. (1998). School board chairmen and school superintendents: An analysis of perceptions concerning special interest groups and educational governance. *Journal of School Leadership*, 8, 373-398.
- Fink, D., & Brayman, C. (2006). School leadership succession and the challenges of change. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42 (62), 61-89.
- Greene, K. (1992). Models of school-board policy-making. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 28 (2), 220-236.
- Hornig, E., Klasik, D., & Loeb, S. (2010). Principal time-use and school effectiveness. *American Journal of Education* 116, (4) 492-523.
- Lafee, S. (2002). Data-driven districts. *School Administrator*, 59(11), 6-7, 9-10, 12, 14-15.
- Leithwood, K., & Sun, J. (2012). The Nature and effects of transformational school leadership: A meta-analytic review of unpublished research. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48 (387). 388-423.

Marks, H., Louis, K.S., & Printy, S. (2002). The capacity for organizational learning: Implications for pedagogy and student achievement. In K. Leithwood (Ed.), *Organizational learning and school improvement* (p. 239-266). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

McIntire, T. (2002). The administrator's guide to data-driven decision making. *Technology and Learning*, 22(11), 18-33.

Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L. (2003). Examination of resource allocation in education: connecting spending to student performance. Austin, TX: SEDL.