

WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

Decatur County Schools

District SACS Accreditation
Information

Why does accreditation matter?

- Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance.
- Accreditation is an ongoing process to ensure that schools and the system:
 1. meet high standards,
 2. engage in continuous improvement, and
 3. demonstrate quality assurance through external review.

What does the process look like?

School Districts that engage in AdvancED Accreditation will:

- Earn the distinction of quality through AdvancED accreditation.
- Receive external and objective validation of the areas in which they're doing well, and the areas for continuous improvement.
- Benefit from AdvancED research that shapes educational policy and improves learning practices.

Students and their parents will:

- Benefit from their school district's commitment to raising student performance and accountability.
- Gain greater access to federal loans, scholarships, postsecondary education and military programs that require students attend an accredited institution.
- Experience ease in transferring credits from one school system to another.

What does the process look like?

Conducted by
District
Employees

Opportunities
for Stakeholder
Analysis

Comprehensive
& Continuous



Conducted by
Educational
Professionals
outside the
District

Evaluation of
Data and
Artifacts

Use of same tools
as Internal
Review

What does the process involve?

Both the District and each school will prepare and submit an Accreditation Comprehensive Report based on the following:

- **Self Assessment** – We assess our performance on each of the Standards with a rating scale.
- **Executive Summary** – We describe our district and tell about who we are.
- **Stakeholder Perception Surveys** – We gather valid and reliable stakeholder perception data to assist us with the continuous improvement process
- **Student Performance Results** - We analyze the results of multiple assessments to measure growth and improvement in student performance.
- **Assurances** – We verify a set of certification statements related to the policies and procedures of AdvancED accreditation.

District & School Responsibilities:

- Develop District & School Improvement Plans
- Analyze Student Performance Data
- Administer Stakeholder Surveys
- Analyze Stakeholder Perception Data
- Complete Self Assessment Reports based on the 5 Standards of Quality
- Collect artifacts and evidence to support the content of the Self Assessment
- Interview with the External Review Team
- Host the Visiting Team

Stakeholder Responsibilities:

- Participate in the Accreditation/Improvement Process
- Provide feedback on district and school initiatives
- Be available for interviews by the External Review Team

What will the External Review include?

- Classroom Observations
- Documentation Review
- Self Assessments
- Stakeholder Survey Results
- Student Performance Data
- Other documentation
- Interviews with various stakeholders
- Feedback from team on improvement plans or a Required Action reflective of the needs of the district/school and its students

Components & Processes:

Step 1: School & District Preparation

- Internal review with staff and stakeholders
- Completion of Self Assessments, Executive Summary, Stakeholder Surveys, Student Performance Data, and Improvement Plans
- March 2012 – December 2012

Step 2: Quality Assurance Review Team Visit (February 2013)

- Conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders
- Review of Student Performance Data & District Documentation
- Deliberation to reach consensus on the district's adherence to the Standards for Accreditation
- Provides an oral exit report and prepares a QAR Team Report

Components & Processes Continued:

Step 3: The Quality Assurance Review Team Report

- The QAR Report is submitted to the school district with commendations and required actions for improvement.

Step 4: Using the Report

- The school district uses the report to guide improvement efforts. The district is held accountable for addressing the required actions in the report.
- The district must submit a progress report that reflects its steps toward the required actions.

Step 5: Accreditation Recommendation

- The QAR Team makes an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed at the state level and by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted and communicated to the school district.