



# **Accreditation Report**

## **Elmore County Board of Education**

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# Executive Summary

## **Introduction**

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school system stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school system, and the kinds of programs and services that a school system implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school system with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the community will have a more complete picture of how the school system perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school system to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## Description of the School System

**Describe the school system's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school system serves?**

The Elmore County Public School System was the first district in the River Region to engage in the district process in 2008 and successfully earned accreditation. In 2010, the system submitted the Accreditation Progress Report outlining the system's efforts to address the recommendations presented in the initial visit. The Executive Summary will provide an update on the changes in the school system the previous five years, progress on the recommendations, and the current focus and initiatives.

According to the last U.S. Census, 79,303 people lived in Elmore County, but that population has already grown to 80,162 in 2011 with the 2012 figures not calculated yet. The population is 76% white, 21% black, 2% Hispanic, and fewer than 1% of other origins. Of this total, 3.7% speak a language other than English in their home. Persons aged one year and older reported as living in the same house (83.2%) indicate a majority stable population. The median income in the county is \$53,128 with 12.4% of the population below the poverty level. The average home is worth \$136,500 with 2.55 persons per household. Of persons aged 25+, 83.8% had at least a high school diploma and 20.2% held a Bachelor's degree or higher. Elmore County has no major industries but many small businesses. A number of residents commute to work in Montgomery and surrounding areas.

The school system is comprised of fourteen schools in four communities, a technical center, and two alternative programs (ICARE and ECAP) for students with serious behavioral or social issues. Special Education (SPED) students comprise 10.8% (1198 students) of the school population not including 792 gifted students and 79 three- and four-year olds served by the system. There are ten multi-needs units. The SPED, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Black subgroups are the areas of concern on state-mandated testing. Elmore County has 393 EL (English Language) students who list a language other than English as primary; they comprise .035% of the population and speak 32 languages including Urdu, Pampanga, Tagalong, Cebuano, Marathi, Mien, and others. Of this number, 147 students (37%) will take the ACCESS for ELLs test this year. Spanish is the overwhelming second language with 289 students; Gujarati is second with 15, and 11 students speak Vietnamese. The population at the 20-day mark for the ADA/ADM Report was 11081 students comprised of White (68.3%), Black (25.4%), Hispanic (2.9%), Multi-Race (2.1%), Asian (.9%), Indian (.3%), and Pacific Islander (.0%). Of that number 6111 (55.1%) are on free and reduced lunch. This number has increased significantly due to the failing economy and lost jobs. As of the 20-day ADA/ADM Report on October 2, the daily attendance rate was 95.6%. The current high school completion rate is 76% (down from 89%) due in large part to the new four-year window for completion. Elmore County employs a certified staff of 777 administrators, teachers, and staff with 100% of its teachers highly qualified and 56% of this total having a Masters or higher degree.

Advanc-Ed Surveys were administered to parents, students, and staff. The staff surveys were positive at 4.0 or better with 3.37 as the lowest individual response and the lowest aggregate school response for all indicators at 3.93. Indicator 3.8 received the largest number of responses at the three level: The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress with 3.9 related to a formal advocacy program for each student and 4.6 with the provision of services to meet the "physical, social, and emotional" needs of students receiving the next lowest numbers of three's. These responses indicate that the system must do more to meet the needs of students beyond the merely academic and must increase its parental involvement and communication on academic matters. Parent surveys (2147) were again in the 3 and 4 level with the lowest school aggregate response at 3.23 and the highest at 4.5. The largest number of parent responses ranging from 3.16-to 4.36 was for indicator 2.3 "The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively." The

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perception of parents appears to be that schools do not have sufficient authority; however, this indicator is contradicted by the teacher response which ranged from a low of 3.82 to a high of 4.72 for the same indicator. The district surveyed 7271 students in grades 2-12. The indicator with the most significant negative response was 4.3 related to maintenance of facilities and a "safe, clean, and healthy environment." In upper middle and high schools, scores ranged from a low of 2.3 (eleven scores rated at 2.3-2.94) to a high of 4.14 at the newest school and 2.94 at the oldest school.

The district did not make AYP in 2010 or 2011 but achieved AYP in 2012 under Delay status as two years of improvement are required to be rated clear. Performance in the SPED, Free and Reduced lunch, and Black subgroups have been the chief factor in the system not achieving AYP although all subgroups have shown growth as revealed in longitudinal data. The system has rededicated itself to ensuring that all subgroups make significant progress; has hired a graduation coach; converted reading coaches to instructional coaches assigned to individual schools to improve instruction and assist teachers; and in an effort to serve all students, the system has intensified its efforts to expand AP opportunities and offer other classes in a more rigorous standards-based curriculum. The Superintendent and his staff are currently engaged in an effort to evaluate policies, practices, and utilization of staff and other resources.

## **System's Purpose**

**Provide the school system's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school system embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

During the 2008 District Accreditation process, Elmore County Public School System engaged in extensive system-wide processes to select a mission and vision. When reaccreditation approached and the system began intensive preparation in the spring of 2012, the district and schools reexamined the previous mission and vision statements and elected to continue with the focus embodied in the unchanged purpose outlined in the statement: Elmore County Public School System strives to prepare students to be responsible and productive citizens in an ever-changing world. This guiding principle is displayed in the BOE meeting room, on school and system websites, in correspondence, and posted throughout all buildings countywide. It is a recurring theme when leaders and their stakeholders engage in discussions prior to making decisions. The system continues to adapt its programs to the changing needs of students. To that end, there is a much greater emphasis on using technology; expanding course offerings; revamping, expanding, and replacing existing programs; intensifying the Response to Intervention (RtI) program; requiring team reviews of selected Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) on a semester rather than annual basis; soliciting the input of all stakeholders; instilling leadership in students, staff, teacher leaders, and aspiring administrators; expanding embedded and online professional development opportunities; and adapting to meet state and national mandates and everchanging foci. The unifying goal of the district is to ensure that our students are competitive and have the skills to be successful in whatever endeavors they attempt.

## Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

**Describe the school system's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school system is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

The Elmore County School System is justifiably proud of its administrators, teachers, and students. Dr. Jeffery Langham is the current State Superintendent of the Year. The number of personnel with advanced degrees including doctorates continues to rise with one hundred percent of teachers highly qualified. In the past three years, numerous teachers and other personnel have received state recognition for their individual achievements (Gifted Coordinator of the Year, national board designation, runner-up for state teacher of the year, WAKA Golden Apple WAKA, WSFA Class Act Award, etc.). Students continue to excel in the robotics competitions at the state and national level and in state fine arts competitions. ACT performance shows gains, and AP enrollment is on the rise with additional course offerings. The system initiated an energy conservation program that has resulted in savings of \$2.6 million. District representatives frequently assist the ALSDE with the norming of existing and new tests, participate in projects (the safety study on bus seatbelts, for example), and serve on state committees for the development of curriculum and other initiatives. At the elementary level, parents and grandparents volunteer frequently and are valued participants in activities during the day and afterward. At upper grades, parents attend extracurricular events such as pageants, concerts, plays, and competitions. Elmore County enjoys close interaction with its legislative representatives who provide financial support and personal interaction. Local political bodies and community partners also support the system's art, science, and other competitions as well as contribute significantly to educational endeavors such as the Wetumpka Project. The system has a Strategic Plan in place that is revisited on an annual basis.

The fourteen schools, technical center, and two programs that comprise the Elmore County Public School System are striving to empower students to be the best they can be. As a district, we are proud of our successes but know we must work hard every day to achieve our mission. Like most school districts, we have challenges that must be addressed. Students in three of our subgroups (SPED, free and reduced lunch, and Black) are not scoring at the same level as other students on state-mandated tests. Their needs must be addressed earlier and more comprehensively through a formal advisory program and utilization of all available school and community services. Regular education and special needs staff must plan, instruct, and evaluate student progress collaboratively. We feel we must instill more academic rigor and improve our graduation rate by teaching to mastery and utilizing strategies that foster student engagement. Sufficient funding is essential to ensure adequate technology. Accelerated Reader, Global Scholar, pre- and post-test assessments, etc. increase the need for more and up-to-date technology, and students with complex disabilities require sophisticated technical equipment to achieve at a higher level. Delivery of instruction, assessment, and data analysis are more effective and current with the programs and tools that are on the market. If we expect educators to adjust their instruction, they must have access to innovations in technology and timely and precise data to enable them to do so most effectively. We recognize the need for a more formal and systematic approach to data analysis throughout all grade levels. When data analysis shows increased achievement, teachers must have opportunities to share successful teaching techniques and programs with colleagues. Both certified and instructional support staff must receive more in-depth training in data analysis. Teachers must be trained in effective disciplinary techniques and encouraged to reward appropriate behavior more often. Such an approach will increase positive interactions among students and teachers, foster a feeling of mutual respect, and motivate students to do their best. Leadership opportunities must continue to be offered to students, teachers, and aspiring administrators while promoting the continued growth of current administrators in ever-expanding programs. And, as always, parents must be made aware of initiatives and be invited to participate as partners. Parents, teachers, and age-appropriate students must be afforded the opportunity to refine mission and vision statements and contribute to the development of school cultures. We recognize that we must revisit our mission and vision on a scheduled and formal basis to ensure relevance. Of utmost importance is that we have the strategies and resources in place to assure a safe learning environment.

The Elmore County Public School System recognizes these concerns and will continue to address the deficiencies that exist.

## Additional Information

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

At the conclusion of the initial district accreditation visit in 2008, the district received four recommendations which the system has sought to address with varying degrees of success. The first recommendation was to expand the budgeting process in order to involve the administrative team and coordinators more actively in the prioritization of programs. Superintendent Langham has responded by holding financial meetings with department heads and administrators. In addition, both he and the Technology Coordinator have given principals latitude in determining how various funds provided to individual schools and technology money may be spent on individual campuses. The Superintendent has written articles and conducted community meetings in order to keep stakeholders informed about the district's financial status and plans for expenditures. School requests are given serious consideration. For example, middle schools at Holtville and Eclectic requested a band instructor. This request was honored with a teacher unit split between the two schools. Although funding has been severely cut due to repeated proration, the Superintendent endeavors to find funding to meet school needs. He and his staff help to guide the schools and employees in securing grants and completing applications for funding of specific projects. The Senior Coordinator for Teaching and Learning has also expanded communication with K-8 principals by involving them in pre-planning and conferring with them monthly. Principals are provided with the exact amount of funding for their individual schools, and their input is sought to determine the expenditures. The Poarch Creek Indians provided the system with a gift of one million dollars. All schools were presented with checks in significant amounts where they were allowed discretion as to the expenditures with Superintendent approval. The bulk of this money went directly to the schools with minor appropriations to the transportation, technology, and curriculum departments. Much progress with greater inclusion has been achieved in this area.

The second recommendation was to develop and implement an effective vertical articulation process. Although progress has been made in this area, more work must be done. At the beginning of the 2011-12 school year, the district initiated K-12 meetings in the core subjects by communities, but there was no follow-up from the discussions although teachers developed more awareness as to what was expected of colleagues at all grade levels, worthwhile information was exchanged, and productive recommendations offered. Individually communities and schools have initiated more contact such as shared data meetings, joint special education and faculty meetings, and placement meetings for specific courses and programs. But there is no coherent program district-wide. More articulation occurs among feeder schools in some communities. Greater benefit would be derived from a specific program with predetermined expectations and a series of options.

The third recommendation was to increase district-level support and resources for schools that fail to meet AYP. The district has provided additional personnel as reading and later instructional coaches at the school level and utilized central office personnel to assist school administrators and teacher leaders to develop appropriate Continuous Improvement Plans. Under the leadership of the School Improvement Specialist, the LEA Accountability Roundtable and school administrators monitor implementation of the plans. Personnel within the system, parents, community leaders, and board members are familiar with this process. As the district moves to provide teachers with more current data within classrooms and the state requires the demonstration of progress annually for each student, it is expected that areas of weakness will show gains and subgroup performance will improve.

The fourth recommendation was to incorporate higher-order thinking skills in a performance-based curriculum to ensure rigor and relevance for all students. The system has made progress in this area by initiating a standards-based curriculum, adding more Advanced Placement and pre-Advanced Placement classes in grades six through eight, increasing enrollment significantly in AP classes, ensuring full inclusion for special needs students with a semester IEP review for those students experiencing problems, providing extensive professional development

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to increase instructional effectiveness, and working to implement the EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT assessments in alignment with state initiatives.

The Superintendent is currently engaged in an evaluation of personnel and fiscal resources in order to ensure the greatest benefits for students. Parents indicate satisfaction with our school system, but he believes it is wise to assess our approaches, programs, and allocation of resources to ensure that we are accomplishing to the level that we should. The District Accreditation process provides an appropriate time for serious introspection.

# Self Assessment

## **Introduction**

AdvancED's Self Assessment (SA) diagnostic is based on the AdvancED Standards of Quality, which serves as the foundation of the accreditation and continuous improvement process. The SA is a valuable tool for collaboratively engaging staff members and stakeholders in purposeful, honest dialogue and reflection to assess the institution's adherence to the Standards, and guide its continuous improvement efforts. The SA includes the institution's self-ratings of and the evidence cited for each of the indicators, comments that explain the indicator's ratings and an overall narrative for each Standard. The results of the SA are reviewed by the External Review Team as one essential component of the preparation process for the institution's External Review.

## 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.

Overall Rating: 2.75

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	The system's process for review, revision, and communication of the purpose statement is documented. The process is formalized and implemented on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement focuses on student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District purpose statements - past and present</li> <li>•Written District Quality Assurance Review procedures and documents that monitor its schools' adherence to the district purpose and direction</li> <li>•Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook)</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>•Newspaper articles; agendas, minutes/notes, and sign in sheets from various stakeholder meetings</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a process for review, revision, and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor each school and sometimes provide feedback for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Examples of written stakeholder communications or marketing materials that portray the school purpose and direction</li> <li>•Written District Quality Assurance Review procedures and documents that monitor schools' adherence to the district purpose and direction and that of the school</li> <li>•Agendas, minutes/notes, and sign in sheets from various stakeholder meetings</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is evident in documentation and decision making. This commitment is regularly reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership and staff share high expectations for professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans</li> <li>•The district strategic plan</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>•Statements or documents about ethical and professional practices</li> <li>•Newspaper articles; agendas, minutes/notes, and sign sheets from various stakeholder meetings</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Leaders at all levels of the system implement a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. All stakeholder groups are engaged in the process. Personnel maintain a profile with current and comprehensive data on student, school, and system performance. The profile contains analyses of data used to identify goals for the improvement of conditions that support student learning and that are aligned with the system's purpose. Improvement goals have measurable performance targets. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Leaders hold all personnel accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. The process is reviewed and evaluated. Documentation that the process yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available and communicated to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The district strategic plan</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>•Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings</li><li>•Examples of schools continuous improvement plans</li><li>•Written District Quality Assurance Review procedures and documents that monitor schools' adherence to the district purpose and direction and that of the school</li></ul>	Level 3

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

The Elmore County Public School System (ECPSS) has a clear and focused purpose and direction. As seen in our vision, mission, and belief statements, it is evident that we believe all students can learn and that our responsibility lies in preparing our students to be productive citizens. The purpose and direction of our school system, which are displayed throughout our school system, is communicated to each student, parent, and community member using a variety of methods. The purpose of ECPSS is to prepare students to be responsible and productive citizens in an ever-changing world. This statement, along with our direction and belief statements, was board approved in the spring of 2007. Committee members representing all communities in the system, in cooperation with the District Accreditation Leadership Team, facilitated the development of these statements. Committee members surveyed stakeholders to obtain their input in the development and adoption of these statements. After examination and a request for input from various stakeholders in the spring of 2012, it was decided that these statements continue to represent our core beliefs and demonstrate the continuing goals of the Elmore County Public School District.

ECPSS's purpose, direction, strategic plan, and Local Improvement Plan (LIP) collectively serve as guideposts for the district. All schools within our system develop their Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) and individual purpose and direction statements using this framework as their guide. The system believes student success is paramount; therefore, monthly leadership meetings are held to discuss instructional programs and managerial issues related to all schools. As articulated in our direction statement, we commit to providing a learning environment where all students will realize their self-worth through continuous academic, social, and emotional growth. ECPSS supports and initiates a variety of professional development opportunities for our staff that reflects the vision of the school system. Continuous Professional Development (PD) opportunities exist to improve instruction and content knowledge and are provided through system-led summer conferences, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), workshops led by instructional coaches and others, and attendance at conferences. PD360, an online professional development program, was purchased by the district last year and allows system-wide access to all support and certified professionals to take advantage of PD without having lost time in classes or travel.

The district, in an effort to create a cohesive educational environment throughout the schools, works diligently to develop consistent expectations in our district and schools' purpose and direction statements. All of our schools, regardless of their Adequate Yearly Progress status, create intensive CIPs designed to meet the identified needs of all students and promote greater academic achievement. To maximize the impact of these efforts, numerous stakeholders participate in both the development and revision of the CIPs and the purpose and direction statements. The superintendent informs school personnel and members of the community of any relevant issues and student success stories through the use of school internet, School Messenger, community meetings, and a variety of media formats. A Student Advisory Committee has been established by the superintendent to give students a voice and to let him know what students are thinking. The district consistently demonstrates its commitment to students and educators by establishing high expectations for teaching and learning and ensuring that teachers and schools are provided with quality resources and training to help meet these expectations.

In an effort to maintain and improve our current strengths in Standard 1, we will continue to build collaboration among all stakeholders by providing timely updates and frequent opportunities for input and reflection regarding our purpose and direction and all academic programs. We will work to ensure that our goals remain consistent throughout the district and that they reflect the evolving needs of our students based on an analysis of student data and the expectations of universities and employers. Our purpose and direction will continue to be displayed in prominent areas and communicated through newsletters, emails, etc. so that the expectations are known by all and will remain a principal focus in the CIP of each school.

During the course of our self-assessment, it became apparent that the district policy of reviewing and revising the purpose, direction, and belief statements was not a consistent focus and that steps would have to be developed and implemented to address this weakness. It was also noted that increased collaboration with all stakeholders would be beneficial to evaluating the effectiveness of all district programs and ensuring that these programs were implemented equitably throughout the district. A more comprehensive analysis of student, school, and district data is needed to create more challenging programs and ensure fidelity in the implementation of any needed interventions and improvement in instructional strategies.

To address these issues, district and school administrators will begin utilizing a more formal process to allow school personnel to reflect on the direction of the schools and provide valuable insight on ways to improve academic achievement and the overall school environment. This will provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to offer suggestions for revision of the mission and vision statements. The goal is to do this annually. The system will look at using the guided questions adapted from Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Many (2006) or a similar process. This will provide a structured format to review the statements and provide anecdotal evidence which can be used in the evaluation of the effectiveness of school and district academic progr

## Governance and Leadership

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

Overall Rating: 2.83

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	Policies and practices support the system's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices promote conditions that support student learning, effective instruction, and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices regarding professional growth of all staff. Policies and practices provide requirements, direction for, and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•School handbooks</li> <li>•District operations manuals</li> <li>•Governing body policies, procedures, and practices</li> <li>•Staff handbooks</li> <li>•Professional development plans</li> <li>•Student handbooks</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	The governing body has a process to ensure that its decisions and actions are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a code of ethics, and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The governing body complies with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations, and functions as a cohesive unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•List of assigned staff for compliance</li> <li>•Proof of legal counsel</li> <li>•Historical compliance data</li> <li>•Governing code of ethics</li> <li>•Assurances, certifications</li> <li>•Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest</li> <li>•Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies</li> <li>•Newspaper articles</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	The governing body protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for improvement in student learning and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations of the system and its schools. The governing body maintains a distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of system and school leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District strategic plan</li> <li>•Survey results regarding functions of the governing authority and operations of the district</li> <li>•Roles and responsibilities of school leadership</li> <li>•Roles and responsibilities of district leadership</li> <li>•Examples of school improvement plans</li> <li>•Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation</li> <li>•Agendas and minutes of meetings</li> <li>•Communications regarding governing authority actions</li> <li>•Social media formats</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders and staff throughout the system align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. They expect all personnel to maintain high standards and to hold students to high standards in all courses of study. All leaders and staff are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system support innovation, collaboration, shared leadership, and professional growth. The culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans</li> <li>•Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction</li> <li>•Examples of collaboration and shared leadership</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan</li> <li>•Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs</li> <li>•Professional development offerings and plans</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders sometimes communicate effectively with stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback from stakeholders, work collaboratively on school improvement efforts, and provide some leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' efforts result in some stakeholder participation and engagement in the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><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>•Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan</li></ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	The focus of the criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation is improving professional practice throughout the system and improving student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are regularly implemented. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice throughout the system and improve student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><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>•Representative supervision and evaluation reports</li><li>•Job specific criteria</li></ul>	Level 3

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

The Elmore County Public School System (ECPSS) operates under governance and leadership that promotes and supports student performance and system effectiveness. The Elmore County Board of Education (ECBOE) is a legal entity created through provisions and statutes in accordance with the State Code of Alabama. The ECBOE functions as a policy-making body that is legally authorized to administer policy. This task is achieved primarily through the Superintendent, an officer of the Board. The ECBOE works to continuously monitor and evaluate the effective implementation of Board policies.

The ECBOE establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system. The Elmore County Policy Manual, the Elmore County Employee Handbook, and the Elmore County Student Handbook and Code of Conduct are provided by the district. In addition, each local school produces teacher handbooks and student handbooks. All handbooks communicate and clarify policies and procedures to ensure consistent support of the ECBOE's purpose and direction.

Board members are provided copies of the school system budgets and monthly financial statements. The Chief School Financial Officer presents the current financial status of the system at regularly scheduled board meetings. Orientation for new Board members includes the opportunity to review local school and system budgets and financial statements.

The Board operates responsibly and functions effectively. Our district provides a policy manual that includes qualifications for school board members, terms of office, method of election, filling of unexpired terms, resignation, and removal as well as the code of ethics for school board members. Compliance with the policy manual ensures a clear and direct framework for our board administration. Our Board members

participate in training sponsored by the Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB) as well as local and federal conferences and conventions.

The relationship between the Board and the Superintendent and his staff is sustained with teamwork and communication. The Superintendent provides an agenda and supporting information such as policies, personnel, and budget reports, to Board members for review prior to Board meetings. Work sessions are held as needed whereby Board members have the opportunity to discuss issues and concerns as well as upcoming activities and projects. Furthermore, Board members and the Superintendent participate in various activities that facilitate teamwork and collaboration such as Board retreats, the Lighthouse Project, and AASB training sessions.

The Superintendent is designated by the Board to manage schools within the framework of Board policies. The Superintendent gives autonomy to local school leaders to create and implement best practices at their local school and manage day-to-day operations. The school leaders are required to evaluate personnel, programs, and processes to determine effectiveness. Central office departments are in place to assist with meeting local, state and federal requirements in curriculum, federal programs, special education, transportation, and technology.

The ECBOE's policy manual clearly defines roles and responsibilities of the Board, certified personnel and support staff. The manual includes an outline of the Board's responsibilities as well as rights and responsibilities of staff. The Board is the general agent of the State of Alabama responsible for carrying out mandatory laws and creating local policy as needed for the successful operation of the school system. The ECBOE policy Manual is currently undergoing a major revision in consultation with an attorney contracted by the AASB in order to streamline and differentiate between policies and procedures.

In order to achieve the system's purpose, the ECBOE created a District Strategic Plan which guided the development of the LEA Improvement Plan (LIP), the CIPs of the local schools, student assessment results, and surveys. Central office personnel, as a part of the review team, are responsible for monitoring and providing feedback to local school leaders concerning their CIP. Walk-throughs are a part of the monitoring process and the progress check of the CIP throughout the school year. Student data is used continuously to determine the success of programs and practices in place.

Evaluation of leadership is completed using LEADAlabama. Teachers are evaluated using EDUCATEAlabama. Administrators and teachers are required to create a Professional Learning Plan (PLP). Local administrators are responsible for supervising the EDUCATEAlabama process. Both evaluation tools assist in assessing and improving professional practices in our system. PD 360 is available for professional development as needed. Support personnel are evaluated biannually.

Policies and practices are in place to provide equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students as well as professional growth of staff. It is a continuous challenge to reach all students, but one we continue to strive to achieve. Professional development is a continuous need as changes occur at the local, state and federal level. An area of focus for the system is to stay abreast of the most current teaching practices and equip our teachers to instruct all students.

Public input is part of the agenda for each regularly scheduled board meeting to promote stakeholder involvement. Some committees at the district and school level have stakeholder participation. In addition to committees, surveys are used to provide opportunities for stakeholders to give feedback. There are a number of opportunities for stakeholders to participate and support local school efforts. However, the system recognizes that more focus is needed to identify ways to increase communication with various stakeholder groups and to increase their involvement at the district and school levels.



## 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.

Overall Rating: 2.58

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Curriculum and learning experiences in each course/class provide all students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills. There is some evidence to indicate curriculum and learning experiences prepare students for success at the next level. Like courses/classes have equivalent learning expectations across the system. Teachers in all schools individualize some learning activities for each student in a way that supports achievement of expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Graduate follow-up surveys</li> <li>•Learning expectations for different courses and programs</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Lesson plans</li> <li>•Enrollment patterns for various courses and programs</li> <li>•Posted learning objectives</li> <li>•Course, program, or school schedules</li> <li>•Survey responses from program leaders receiving students from previous programs, schools, or grade-levels</li> <li>•Descriptions of instructional techniques</li> <li>•Newspaper articles</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Using data from student assessments and an examination of professional practice, system and school personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose. There is a process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction, and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level. The continuous improvement process ensures that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum</li> <li>•Standards-based report cards</li> <li>•Surveys results</li> <li>•Curriculum guides</li> <li>•Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps</li> <li>•Common assessments for reading and math in grades K-6 and Language Arts and math in grades 7-10</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	Teachers in most schools sometimes use instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills. Teachers personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of groups of students when necessary. Teachers sometimes use instructional strategies that require students to apply knowledge and skills, integrate content and skills with other disciplines, and use technologies as instructional resources and learning tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource</li> <li>•Surveys results</li> <li>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs</li> <li>•Authentic assessments</li> <li>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation</li> <li>•Findings from supervisor formal and informal observations</li> <li>•Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool</li> <li>•Newspaper articles</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	System and school leaders formally and consistently monitor instructional practices through supervision and evaluation procedures to ensure that they 1) are aligned with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning, 2) are teaching the approved curriculum, 3) are directly engaged with all students in the oversight of their learning, and 4) use content-specific standards of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Supervision and evaluation procedures</li> <li>•Surveys results</li> <li>•Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions</li> <li>•Curriculum maps</li> <li>•Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	Some system staff participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both informally and formally. Collaboration occasionally occurs across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions. Staff members promote discussion about student learning and the conditions that support student learning. Learning, using, and discussing the results of inquiry practices such as action research, the examination of student work, reflection, study teams, and peer coaching sometimes occur among system personnel. System personnel express belief in the value of collaborative learning communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees</li> <li>•Newspaper article</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	Most teachers in the system use an instructional process that informs students of learning expectations and standards of performance. Exemplars are sometimes provided to guide and inform students. The process may include multiple measures, including formative assessments, to inform the ongoing modification of instruction. The process provides students with feedback about their learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li> <li>•Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction</li> <li>•Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	System personnel are engaged in mentoring, coaching, and induction programs that are consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching, learning, and the conditions that support learning. These programs set expectations for all system personnel and include measures of performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices</li> <li>•Records of meetings and informal feedback sessions</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff</li> <li>•Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs with references to district and school beliefs and values about teaching and learning</li> <li>•Leadership Academy</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Programs that engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education are designed and implemented. System and school personnel regularly inform families of their children's learning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>•Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress</li> <li>•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li> <li>•Performance-based report cards</li> <li>•Volunteer program with variety of options for participation</li> <li>•Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning</li> <li>•Newspaper articles</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Most school personnel participate in a structure designed by the system that gives them interaction with individual students, allowing them to build relationships over time with the student. Most students participate in the structure. The structure allows the school employee to gain insight into the student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Description of formalized structures for adults to advocate on behalf of students</li> <li>•Curriculum and activities of structures for adults advocating on behalf of students</li> <li>•List of students matched to adults who advocate on their behalf</li> </ul>	Level 2

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Teachers across the system use common grading and reporting policies, processes, and procedures based on clearly defined criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These policies, processes, and procedures are implemented in all schools across grade levels and courses. Stakeholders are aware of the policies, processes, and procedures. The policies, processes, and procedures are regularly evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting</li><li>•Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting</li></ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning that is aligned with the system's purpose and direction. Professional development is based on assessment of needs of the system. The program builds capacity among all professional and support staff. The program is systematically evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Evaluation tools for professional learning</li><li>•District professional development plan involving the district and all schools</li><li>•Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs</li></ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	System and school personnel use data to identify unique learning needs of special populations of students based on proficiency and/or other learning needs (such as second languages). System and school personnel are familiar with research related to unique characteristics of learning (such as learning styles, multiple intelligences, personality type indicators) and provide or coordinate related learning support services to students within these special populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Data used to identify unique learning needs of students</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning</li><li>•List of learning support services and student population served by such services</li><li>•Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services</li></ul>	Level 2

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Elmore County Public School System (ECPSS) provides curriculum and learning experiences that afford students challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills. Teams of teachers analyze Alabama Course of Study (ALCOS)/College and

Career-Ready Standards (CCRS) and develop pacing guides and common assessments to be used throughout the system. English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics teachers meet at least twice a year to analyze common assessment results and ensure horizontal and vertical articulation of the content. Data from these meetings, state-mandated tests, formative assessments, and other sources are used to guide curriculum revision as well as inform the development of the LEA Improvement Plan (LIP) and the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) for each school. The CIP guides instructional improvement with the goal of increasing students' academic proficiency. Curriculum development/revision based on data analysis is an area of strength for the system. ECPSS utilizes a comprehensive assessment system which is fully detailed in the Standard 5 narrative of the self-assessment.

Teachers receive professional development on instructional best practices to increase student engagement and, to promote individualized strategies and interventions for students as needed. This professional development equips teachers to plan activities that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and critical thinking. Teachers are continually encouraged to expand their use of technology as an instructional resource. Students are required to apply knowledge and skills and use technology as a learning tool. Utilizing strategies to foster student engagement is an ongoing area of focus in the system. Evidence of this can be found in walk-throughs, observations, and assessment data.

The system monitors and supports the improvement of instructional practices of teachers by providing access to high-quality professional development. The Comprehensive Professional Development/Technology/Title I Needs Assessment Survey is administered annually in the spring and allows teachers to identify areas where professional development is needed. The system uses this and other data sources to develop a professional development plan to guide its efforts for the next school year. EDUCATEAlabama, the teacher evaluation system, requires each teacher to self-assess each fall and develop a professional learning plan to focus on at least two areas for improvement. Teachers may participate in on-site professional development, attend out-of-system events, take college courses, and take advantage of PD360, an online professional development resource. An area of strength in the system is the teacher mentoring program. To further support instructional improvement, the system mentoring specialist works intensively with first year teachers to coach and support their induction into the profession. The mentoring specialist coordinates the system mentoring program whereby experienced teachers are paired with novice teachers for a three-year period. To a lesser extent, the mentoring specialist works with second- and third-year teachers and identified veteran teachers but adjusts the support provided to meet their specific needs, with the goal of retaining certified, highly-qualified staff.

ECPSS strives to operate as a collaborative learning organization as evidenced through grade-level and departmental meetings in all schools as well as system-level meetings aimed at fostering horizontal and vertical articulation within each content area. While this is noted as an improvement area, the system understands the benefits to all stakeholders of collaborative structures and processes, and plans to strengthen efforts to firmly establish a culture of collaboration throughout the system.

The system has clearly-defined criteria for grading and reporting grades at all grade levels as outlined in the K-12 Management of Curriculum Guide and content-area pacing guides and calendars. Teachers hold students accountable to the ALCOS/CCRS which are clearly communicated to students and stakeholders through course syllabi, student contracts, open houses, parent report days, Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) and Advanced Placement (AP) meetings, and other academically-related meetings. A number of formative assessments are used to measure the academic levels of students including Global Scholar, Classworks, STAR Reading, FASTTMath, pre- and post-tests, classroom assessments, etc. Students receive timely feedback from these assessments, and the data are used to identify necessary interventions as well as guide the need for possible curriculum revision.

ECPSS recognizes the importance of building relationships with students and their families. Some schools have a structured student advisory program in place whereby each student is known and supported by at least one adult advocate. However, the system plans to investigate ways to ensure that an advisory program is established on every campus. This is an area of focus for the system, and is due, in part, to staffing and scheduling constraints.

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An area of strength for ECPSS is the level of engagement of families in their children's education. Numerous programs and methods of communication to foster engagement are implemented throughout the system, including open houses, parent report days, academic nights, School Messenger callout system, student performances, school and teacher newsletters, parent centers, school websites, teacher web pages, social networks, iNow Parent Portal, surveys, school calendars, volunteer opportunities, etc. The system and all of its schools recognize the need to reach out to families. We make every effort to utilize all available resources to reach as many families as possible to increase participation in their children's education.

## 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.

Overall Rating: 2.62

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Policies, processes, and procedures ensure that system and school leaders have access to, hire, place, and retain qualified professional support staff. System and school leaders systematically determine the number of personnel necessary to fill all the roles and responsibilities necessary to support purposes, educational programs, and continuous improvement throughout the district. Sustained fiscal resources are available to fund positions critical to achieve the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assessments of staffing needs</li> <li>•District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools</li> <li>•Survey results</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>•Documentation of highly qualified staff</li> <li>•District budgets or financial plans for the last three years</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are focused on supporting the purpose and direction of the system, its schools, educational programs, and system operations. Instructional time is protected in policy and practice. System and school leaders work to secure material and fiscal resources to meet the needs of all students and improve the effectiveness of the system. System and school leaders demonstrate that instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are allocated so that all students have equitable opportunities to attain challenging learning expectations. Efforts toward the continuous improvement of instruction and operations include achieving the purpose and direction of the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of school schedules</li> <li>•District strategic plan showing resources support for district</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction</li> <li>•Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources</li> <li>•Examples of school calendars</li> <li>•Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction</li> <li>•Newspaper articles</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	System and school leaders have some expectations for maintaining safety, cleanliness, and a healthy environment, and have shared these definitions and expectations with most stakeholders. Selected system and school personnel are accountable for maintaining these expectations. Some measures are in place that allow for tracking of these conditions. Personnel work to improve these conditions. Results of improvement efforts are monitored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Example school records of depreciation of equipment</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements</li> <li>•Example systems for school maintenance requests</li> <li>•Example maintenance schedules for schools</li> <li>•Newspaper articles</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	The system has policies and procedures for strategic resource management. The system employs a long-range strategic planning process in the areas of budget, facilities, and other strategic system components. The strategic planning process is evaluated for effectiveness, and improvement plans related to the process are developed and implemented when necessary. Strategic plans are implemented with fidelity by the governing body, and system leaders and have built-in measures used to monitor implementation and completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities, learning environments</li> <li>•District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems</li> <li>•Survey results</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to ensure that all students, school, and system personnel have access to the media and information resources necessary to achieve the educational programs of the system and its schools. The system implements and evaluates processes to ensure qualified personnel are recruited, hired, and retained in sufficient numbers to assist students, school and system personnel in learning about the tools and locations for finding and retrieving information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information</li> <li>•Data on media and information resources available to students and staff</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Newspaper article</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	The system provides a modern, fully functional technology infrastructure, modern, updated equipment, and a qualified technical support staff to meet the teaching, learning, and operational needs of all stakeholders throughout the system. System and school personnel collect data concerning needs and use the resulting data to develop and implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, infrastructure, and equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assessments to inform development of district and school technology plans</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level</li> <li>•Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level</li> <li>•Examples of school-level technology plans and budgets to improve technology services and infrastructure to students and staff</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	The system has a process to determine the physical, social, and emotional needs of students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of as many students as possible. System and school personnel regularly evaluate programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are sometimes designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills</li> <li>•Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education</li> <li>•Student assessment system for identifying student needs</li> <li>•Rubrics on developmentally appropriate benchmarks; e.g. early childhood education</li> <li>•List of support services available to students</li> <li>•Newspaper articles</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	The system has a process to determine the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of as many students as possible. System and school personnel regularly evaluate programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are sometimes designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Description of referral process</li> <li>•List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Description of IEP process</li> <li>•Newspaper article</li> </ul>	Level 2

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

Elmore County Public School System (ECPSS) strives to ensure that students have safe schools with effective leadership, qualified teachers, committed support staff, and a challenging curriculum with necessary resources in order to achieve their educational goals. The system complies with established policies and procedures as outlined in the Elmore County Policy and Procedure Manual and with federal and state guidelines to ensure that the personnel in place are qualified to support and maintain the system's vision, educational programs, and continuous improvement. Staffing is largely determined by the State Foundation Program. The system strives to create a caring, challenging, and empowering learning community for teachers.

ECPSS gears every decision towards increasing student achievement. Instructional time is protected through effective scheduling practices. The expectation throughout the system to implement bell to bell teaching and learning is accomplished by creating master schedules that are carefully crafted to ensure effective use of staff and support student needs. A system-wide calendar is readily accessible to all stakeholders to assist with sharing the educational responsibility among home, school, and community. Materials and fiscal resources are used to accommodate student and teacher needs. An area of strength of the system is the continuous effort to secure materials and fiscal resources to support the vision and mission of the system. The collaborative budgeting process is an area of strength for the system.

The system and each school have a crisis intervention plan. Schools conduct fire/tornado drills, bus evacuations, and lockdown drills on a regular schedule. The system recently implemented Virtual Alabama which serves as an informational tool to provide 3D global interface to retrieve images of school floor plans that can be provided to Alabama's first responders. Implementing strategies and resources for continued safe environments is an ongoing area of focus for our system. Evidence of this can be found in the daily operations of each school and the requirement of all employees to wear current name badges throughout the school day.

The Strategic Plan for the system provides the compass for the schools' leadership to ensure that decisions are made with the goal to improve all areas of the system. The Strategic Plan is a working document that was developed by collaborative committees and is utilized in implementing processes and plans for maintaining and improving facilities. Emphasis is placed on providing financial support to assist students in reaching the vision and mission for the system. Each year the Five-Year Capital Plan is reviewed. Long-range planning is an area of strength for the system and evidence of this can be noted through recent construction and renovation projects.

An area of strength for ECPSS is the level of effective implementation of resources for numerous programs and methods of communication to foster engagement throughout the system. School librarians work to provide additional training and access to media information. ECPSS has a Technology/Parent Advisory Committee that plans, approves, and evaluates the system technology needs. The system has at least one technology coordinator at each campus who works in concert with the system Technology Department to provide technology support to each school, effective training to personnel in the use and implementation of resources, as well as piloting new technology initiatives. Classrooms within the system are 21st century capable and all buildings in the system have Internet connectivity. A noted strength for ECPSS is the infrastructure which currently supports all academic and administrative initiatives.

The system recognizes the importance of supporting students to meet their physical, emotional, and social needs. A lead nurse is employed to provide assistance to the fourteen nurses throughout the system in order to meet the needs of students with critical health concerns. Identified students are offered assistance through occupational therapy, physical therapy, vision and hearing screenings, homebound, and 504 services. Students qualifying with emotional or social needs receive services at ICARE. ECPSS participates in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program to provide students with balanced, nutritious meals that meet USDA requirements. Family

applications are provided to determine qualification for free/reduced meals. Providing effective support services continues to be an area of focus. The system plans to continue to investigate ways to ensure that programs meet the needs of students and are evaluated for effectiveness.

ECPSS supports opportunities to provide students with the knowledge and skills base to become contributing members of a global society. The system promotes the development of decision-making skills through a variety of recurrent and embedded activities that include positive student supports, behavior intervention plans, and leadership and character development. The system employs certified school counselors at each school. ECPSS recognizes that this is an area of focus in order to more effectively meet the needs of all students.

## 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.

Overall Rating: 2.2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	System and school personnel use an assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures. These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system performance. The assessment system provides consistent measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions. Some assessments are proven reliable and bias free. The assessment system is evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model</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>•Survey results</li> <li>•Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning from data sources are documented and used by professional and support staff throughout the district. Data sources provide a picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. System and school personnel use data to design and implement improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning</li> <li>•District quality control procedures that monitor schools in effectively using data to improve instruction and student learning</li> <li>•Examples of changes to the district strategic plan based on data results</li> <li>•List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning</li> </ul>	Level 2

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	Most professional and support staff members are assessed and trained in a professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data</li> <li>•Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data</li> <li>•Documentation of attendance and training related to data use</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	A process exists for analyzing data that determine verifiable improvement in student learning including readiness for and success at the next level. Results indicate mixed levels of improvement, and system and school personnel sometimes use these results to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement action plans related to student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data</li> <li>•Student surveys</li> <li>•Evidence of student readiness for the next level</li> <li>•Evidence of student growth</li> <li>•Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning</li> </ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	System and school leaders monitor comprehensive information about student learning, system and school effectiveness, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals. Leaders regularly communicate results using multiple delivery methods and to all stakeholder groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups</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>•Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement</li> <li>•District quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, systems that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals</li> </ul>	Level 3

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

Elmore County Public School System (ECPSS) works collaboratively to use results for continuous improvement at schools and system-wide to ensure the accomplishment of the vision and mission. These systems include Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Building Leadership Teams (BLT), and the LEA Accountability Roundtable Committee consisting of administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, central office staff, and board members. The LEA Roundtable Committee conducts quarterly walk-throughs focusing on active student engagement, equity within classrooms, and differentiated instructional strategies. Additionally, ECPSS employs curriculum supervisors, instructional partners and coaches, a mentoring specialist, a graduation coach, and highly qualified faculty and staff to carry out the system's purpose and direction. The system uses the Strategic Plan, the LEA Improvement Plan (LIP), and the Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs) as monitoring tools for continuous improvement. These plans are developed from student assessments with corresponding data analysis, stakeholder perception surveys, demographics, professional development needs assessment, parental involvement, and budgets.

The results of system-developed and standardized assessments inform and guide instruction. Student learning is monitored through the Global Scholar Performance Series Diagnostic Assessment and/or Classworks. The Wetumpka Project relies upon Data Director. These three programs promote standards mastery for all students through technology integration, data analysis, and tiered instruction. Both state-mandated and teacher-made assessments are aligned with state standards.

ECPSS administers grade- and/or content-specific formative and summative assessments including the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS), the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR), the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test Plus (ARMT+) for third through eighth graders, the Alabama Science Assessment (ASA) embedded in the ARMT+ given to fifth and seventh grade students, the Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA) for qualifying special needs students, the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE), the EXPLORE test for eighth graders, the PLAN test for tenth graders, the Advanced Placement (AP) Exams, and the ACCESS for English Language Learners for English Learners (EL). These assessments were developed at the state or national level; therefore they are reliable and free of bias.

Additional common assessments are administered to students in grades K-10 (DIBELS Math, English 9 and 10, Algebra I, for example). These include system-developed pre- and post-tests, benchmarks, and/or some program assessments (FASTT Math, Classworks, Global Scholar). Results of these assessments determine areas of focus for planning instruction based on the needs of the students. District leaders work to ensure that assessments provide consistent measurement across the school system. The system recognizes a need for the evaluation of assessments to determine their effectiveness in improving teaching and learning.

System and school personnel use data to design and implement improvement plans, to advance student learning, determine instructional strategies, and evaluate the effectiveness of programs and the conditions that support learning. District and school leaders monitor comprehensive information about student achievement, system effectiveness and the success of system and school improvement goals. Each school collects, analyzes, and responds to data in order to measure levels of improvement in student learning including readiness for success at the next level.

Central office personnel, principals, instructional coaches, and teachers meet to discuss student achievement as indicated by assessment results. Schools conduct scheduled data, grade-level and/or departmental meetings to examine assessment results and assist teachers in planning instruction. Processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning from data sources are documented and used by certified and support personnel. However, an effort to develop a more systematic practice for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning

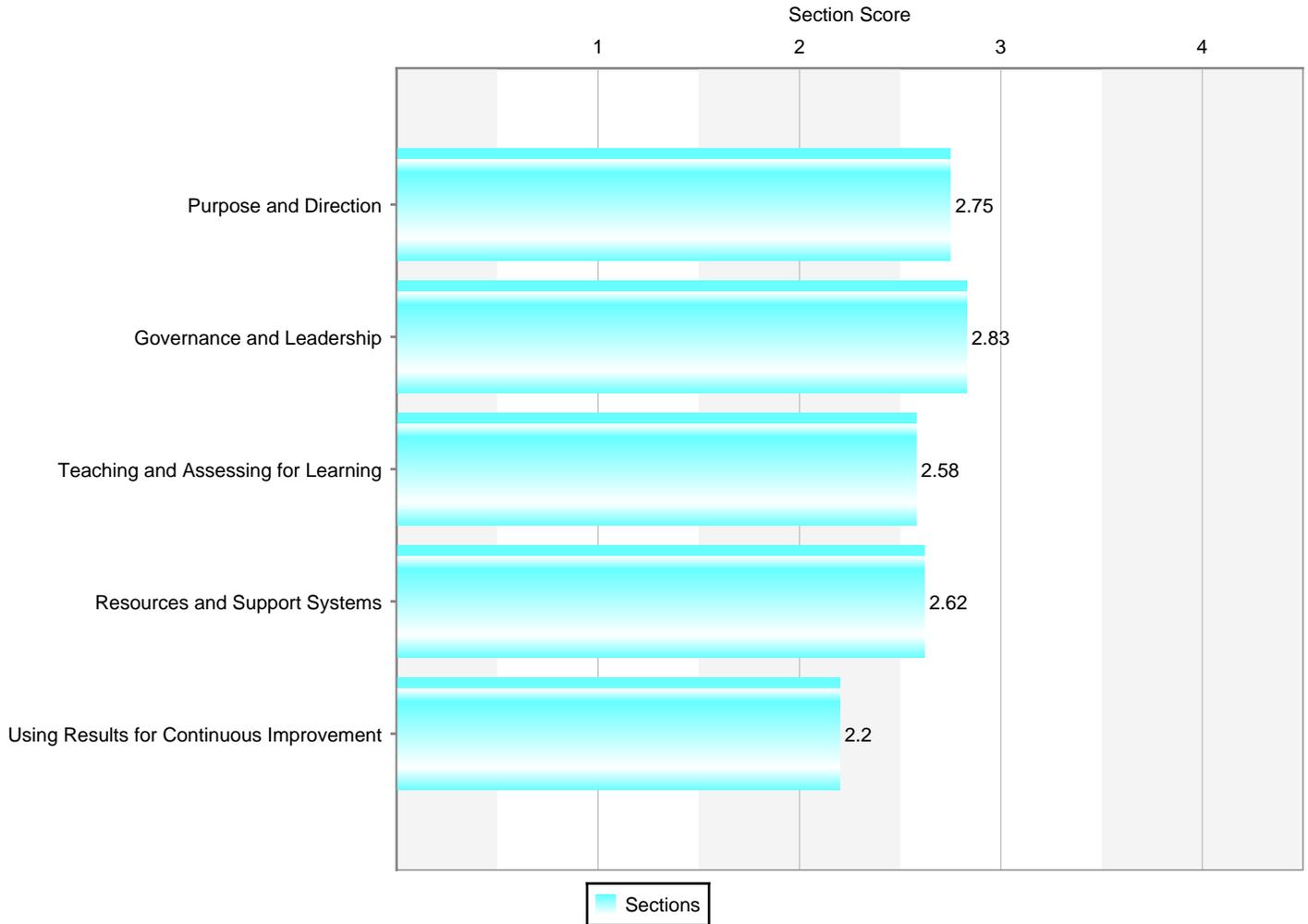
is an area of focus. These practices will include procedures for consistent analysis of data.

Teachers and support personnel have been provided access to PD360, a web-based program designed to provide professional development that includes training on effective data analysis. The system realizes the need to provide training for instructional support personnel in data analysis. The district also plans to take a more complete approach to data analysis by including comparisons and trends and expanding the use of item analysis for system and classroom assessments. Longitudinal data indicate that the system has done an adequate job of providing needed interventions and remediation for lower performing students. These students are identified at each school and, based on student data, needs are addressed via Response to Instruction (RtI) and monitored by the Problem Solving Team (PST). However, data also show that additional efforts are indicated to address the needs of secondary learners who have met or exceeded the required standards. ECPSS began addressing this area of focus through the expanded implementation of the A+ College Ready Program, an AP curriculum, and adding pre-AP courses at the middle school level.

Results of assessments are shared with stakeholders using a variety of methods including websites, system communications, school newsletters, newspaper articles, social media, email, school calendar, the iNow Parent Portal, and parent meetings. Individual student scores are shared with parents through home reports, web access to grades, and parent-teacher conferences. The ECPSS maintains a policy of open communication with all stakeholders.

## Report Summary

### Scores By Section



# Assurances Report

## AdvancED Assurances

Assurance	Certified	Comment/Attachment
<p>The institution has read, understands, and complies with the AdvancED Policies and Procedures.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>AdvancED Policies and Procedures were reviewed with all central office personnel and local school facilitators. Central office personnel shared this information with employees unable to attend the initial meeting, and school facilitators shared this information with all staff members at each school. Sign in sheets from meetings serve as documentation for this process.</p> <p><a href="#">AdvancED Accreditation Policies and Procedures.pdf</a></p>
<p>The system verifies that all institutions within its jurisdiction meet the AdvancED Standards for Schools. Attach a description of the quality assurance process used to monitor the institutions.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>As part of the continuous improvement process, the district and schools conduct walk-throughs in all Elmore County Schools quarterly. Teams composed of school employees, board members, and parents monitor quality assurance in all schools through the use of a walk-through form based on strategies from Continuous Improvement Plans and the Local Improvement Plan. Results are reported to the principal and relayed to school staff to make instructional improvements. Implementation of these improvements is monitored in subsequent walk-throughs. This process ensures that we inspect what we expect.</p> <p><a href="#">Elmore County Quality Assurance Process Walk-through forms.pdf</a></p>

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<p>The institution monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>All Elmore County Public School financial transactions are audited on a yearly basis by the State of Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts. In addition to this formal process, the Alabama State Department of Education can view all transactions through the state accounting computer system at any time. Local schools are audited yearly by personnel from the Elmore County Public School Finance Department. All school transactions may be viewed at any time by the system through CSI-McAleer Solutions. <u><a href="#">Audit 09-10 and 10-11 pdf - Adobe Acrobat Pro (3).pdf</a></u></p>
<p>The institution engages in a continuous improvement process and implements an improvement plan. Attach the improvement plan if the plan is not located in AdvancED's Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST).</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Each Alabama public school in School Improvement is required to complete and implement an annual Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) based on current assessment data. The Elmore County Public School System requires ALL schools to complete this continuous improvement plan annually. The district completes and implements a Local Education Agency (LEA) Improvement Plan (LIP) annually, if in School Improvement. Each school CIP and the LIP are based on the Elmore County Strategic Plan. The LIP and the Strategic Plan are combined into one document and are attached. <u><a href="#">2012-2013 LIP Strategic Plan.pdf</a></u></p>

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<p>The institution implements a written security and crisis management plan which includes emergency evacuation procedures and appropriate training for stakeholders. Attach the security and crisis management plan. (optional)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>All campuses in the Elmore County Public School System are required to develop and implement a written security and crisis management plan (Safety Plan). These plans are revisited and updated on a yearly basis. The Elmore County Board of Education (Central Office) also develops a safety plan. All plans are reviewed by school and system personnel and emergency processes are practiced on a regular basis. Fire Evacuation and Severe Weather maps are posted throughout all buildings county-wide. Additional measures are currently being explored to strengthen safety.</p>
<p>The institution has reported all substantive changes in the institution that affect the scope and/or have an impact on the institution's ability to meet the AdvancED standards and policies. Such changes include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Restructuring (merging, opening, or closing) of the institution or institution(s) within its jurisdiction</li><li>•Mission and purpose of the institution</li><li>•Governance structure of the institution, including changing to a charter school/school system, being the subject of a state takeover, or a change in ownership</li><li>•Grade levels served by the institution</li><li>•Staffing, including administrative and other non-teaching professionals personnel</li><li>•Available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance</li><li>•Level of funding</li><li>•School day or school year</li><li>•Establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus</li><li>•Student population that causes program or staffing modification(s)</li><li>•Available programs, including fine arts, practical arts and student activities</li></ul>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>All substantive changes for Elmore County Public Schools are reported to AdvancED and are in accordance with AdvancED standards and policies.</p>

# Student Performance Diagnostic

## **Introduction**

The Student Performance Diagnostic provides an institution with a process to report summative student assessments. This diagnostic is significant to the accreditation and continuous improvement process as it serves as a resource for schools to view content area assessment results required by the state, district, or other entities, determine the quality and reliability of the given assessments, and show the alignment of the assessments to the school's curriculum. The performance level computed at the completion of the diagnostic is used by the external review team as a comprehensive report to understand fully the institution's assessment program; the diagnostic should be used in the same manner by the institution as it engages in improvement planning.

## Assessment Scores

Label	Question	Value
<b>1. Quality Score</b>	Enter the average assessment quality score from the Student Performance Worksheet (this average is based on the score for each assessment based on the rubric below).	4.0

Label	Question	Value
<b>2. Alignment Score</b>	Enter the average assessment alignment score from the Student Performance Worksheet (this average is based on the score for each assessment based on the rubric below).	4.0

Label	Question	Value
<b>3. Disaggregation/Analysis Score</b>	Enter the average disaggregation/analysis score from the Student Performance Worksheet (this average is based on the score for each assessment based on the rubric below ).	3.0

Label	Question	Value
<b>4. Student Results Status Score</b>	Enter the average student results status score from the Student Performance Worksheet.	18.0

Label	Question	Value
<b>5. Improvement Score</b>	Enter the average improvement score from the Student Performance Worksheet.	8.0

Label	Question	Value
<b>6. Overall Student Performance Score</b>	Enter the average overall student performance score from the Student Performance Worksheet.	37.0

## Areas of Notable Achievement

### Which area(s) are above the expected levels of performance?

The Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA) shows areas above the expected level of performance as indicated by the Improvement Score. Fourth grade reading (0.67), sixth grade reading (0.76), sixth grade math (0.95), and eleventh grade science (0.95) are areas with the greatest increase. Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT+) scores show above expected levels in several areas. Although these are not significant gains, there was an increase in achievement. These areas include third grade reading (0.05), fourth grade reading (0.07), fifth grade reading (0.08), sixth grade reading (0.06), and seventh grade reading (0.10). In the area of mathematics there are increases in fifth grade math (0.02), seventh grade math (0.07), and eighth grade math (0.06). EXPLORE results show improvements in eighth grade reading (0.20), eighth grade science (0.16), and eighth grade English (0.14). Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) results show positive gains in all content areas but the most significant areas are reading (0.26) and social studies (0.38). In particular, the social studies scores are above the expected level of performance but students traditionally struggle in this area. It is evident that teaching strategies implemented are successful and adjustments in instruction are necessary to experience significant growth in student achievement.

### Describe the area(s) that show a positive trend in performance.

AAA scores show improvement in 13 out of 17 content/grade level areas. ARMT+ reading scores show an increase in 5 out of 6 grade levels. EXPLORE scores show positive gains in 3 out of 4 content areas (reading, science, and English). AHSGE score show increases in all 5 content areas (reading, math, biology, social studies, and language). Due to the implementation of teaching strategies and methods, the overall data indicate a continuous growth in the area of reading. A tremendous focus has been placed on the application of reading comprehension for many years. It is evident that this focus is the driving force behind gains in reading.

### Which area(s) indicate the overall highest performance?

AAA scores in fourth grade reading with a weighted mean score of 3.67 and sixth grade math with a weighted mean score of 3.67 show the overall highest performance for this assessment. ARMT+ scores with the highest overall performance include third grade reading (3.51), fourth grade reading (3.53), sixth grade reading (3.53), and seventh grade reading (3.51). Two areas of the EXPLORE are identified as highest achieving. These include eighth grade reading (2.56) and eighth grade English (2.53). AHSGE scores in biology (3.27) are the highest for this particular assessment.

### Which subgroup(s) show a trend toward increasing performance?

Based on data collected from 2006-2012, five subgroups show a trend toward increasing performance on the ARMT/ARMT+ and the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE). Reading scores in fifth through eighth, and eleventh grades show increasing performance in All Students, Special Education, Blacks, Poverty (free and reduced lunch), and White subgroups. This information is based on the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set by state and federal guidelines. Mathematics shows an increase in the All Students, Special Education, Blacks, Whites, and Poverty (free and reduced lunch) subgroups in third, fourth, fifth, seventh, eighth, and eleventh grades.

Gains for reading and math range from 0 to 25 points. In cases showing no growth when comparing 2006 to 2012, the scores have

fluctuated during the 7 year period.

**Between which subgroups is the achievement gap closing?**

The achievement gap is closing between the Black and White subgroup. This is based on data from the ARMT/ARMT+ for reading and math in grades three through eight from 2006-2012, and from the AHSGE for eleventh grade for 2010-2012. The achievement gaps show inconsistent closing from year to year, but the overall gap for these particular subgroups continues to close.

**Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other data sources?**

The Elmore County Public School System is experiencing the initial implementation of Global Scholar for the 2012-2013 school year. Developed by Scantron, Global Scholar's mission statement: Scantron's Testing and Assessment Division provides high quality technology-based assessment solutions for the immediate, accurate and reliable capture of student performance data necessary to impact instruction and inform leadership, best describes the purpose of this program. This program is designed to provide teachers with formative data to guide instruction and achievement data to measure success. Upon full implementation, the system will have an additional data source to utilize in comparing and searching for results consistent with state-mandated summative assessment results. The information that Global Scholar provides will ensure that school personnel utilize appropriate instructional practices for all students, with particular attention to students at both ends of the spectrum.

## Areas in Need of Improvement

### Which area(s) are below the expected levels of performance?

Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA) results, based on Improvement Scores, in seventh grade reading (-0.50), seventh grade math (-0.17), seventh grade science (-0.25), and eleventh grade science (-0.13) are below the expected levels of performance. Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT+) scores in third grade math (-0.05), fourth grade math (-0.05), sixth grade math (-0.02), and eighth grade reading (-0.02) indicate scores below the expected level. EXPLORE scores for eighth grade math show a score of (-0.10). All scores identified show a negative Improvement Score. It is also apparent that a large number of students are scoring at levels 1 and 2 on the EXPLORE. These results are perhaps due to the nature of the exam. Elmore County has begun to administer the PLAN to all tenth students throughout the county. The logical data analysis is to compare the results of the PLAN and EXPLORE to measure the movement of students from levels 1 and 2 up to levels 3 and 4. The Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) results show positive gains in all content areas.

### Describe the area(s) that show a negative trend in performance.

AAA Improvement Scores show positive gains in all areas with the exception of seventh grade and eleventh grade math. The negative trend is the lack of improvement in seventh grade scores. Reading, math, and science scores for seventh grade are not consistent with other AAA scores. ARMT+ scores indicate 3 out of 6 grade levels failed to show growth. EXPLORE scores indicate a weakness in eighth grade math. The general negative trend is in the area of math. While much focus has been placed on reading in the last decade, it is evident that an equal focus is needed in math. The adoption of College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) in mathematics requires the teaching of more rigorous standards. Our twofold efforts will include closing overall learning gaps in math while implementing a new curriculum.

### Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest performance?

The lowest overall performance for the AAA is in the area of seventh grade reading with a 2.50 weighted mean score. ARMT+ scores indicate the overall lowest performances to be in sixth grade math with a weighted mean score of 2.98. In 2011, a total of 88 students scored at level 1 on all areas/grade levels of the ARMT+ while only 72 students scored at level 1 in 2012. While this is an improvement, it is obvious that an excessive number of students are scoring at level 1 despite the implementation of various teaching strategies and using data to drive instruction. EXPLORE scores show the lowest scores in math with a weighted mean score of 2.22 and the overall lowest performance on the AHSGE is language with a score of 2.82. Although the scores show positive gains on the AHSGE for social studies and language, the data show that no students have scored at level 4 in 2011 or 2012. Overall, it is evident that there are improvements to be made at both ends of the spectrum and should span across all grade levels.

### Which subgroup(s) show a trend toward decreasing performance?

Blacks, Special Education, and Poverty subgroups have shown significant improvement in performance over the last 3 years for eleventh grade reading on the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE). However, while the results for these subgroups have shown gains,

the scores continue to be an area of focus. The Special Education subgroup in grades three through eight have shown improvement in math and reading on the ARMT/ARMT+. Although these results for the Special Education subgroup have shown improvement, the scores continue to be an area of concern.

**Between which subgroups is the achievement gap becoming greater?**

Although the Special Education, Blacks, General Education, Poverty, and Non-poverty subgroups have closed achievement gaps since 2006, this continues to be an area of focus.

**Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other data sources?**

The Elmore County Public School System is experiencing the initial implementation of Global Scholar for the 2012-2013 school year. Developed by Scantron, Global Scholar's mission statement: Scantron's Testing and Assessment Division provides high quality technology-based assessment solutions for the immediate, accurate and reliable capture of student performance data necessary to impact instruction and inform leadership, best describes the purpose of this program. This program is designed to provide teachers with formative data to guide instruction and achievement data to measure success. Upon full implementation, the system will have an additional data source to utilize in comparing and searching for results consistent with state-mandated summative assessment results. The information that Global Scholar provides will ensure that school personnel utilize appropriate instructional practices for all students, with particular attention to students at both ends of the spectrum.