



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

Standards Assessment Report

Franklin County Board of Education

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Prepared for the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review

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Standards Assessment Report

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Introduction & Purpose of the Report

Introduction

Purpose of the Report

The Standards Assessment Report is designed to serve as a valuable self-assessment and as a tool to help school systems prepare for their Quality Assurance Review. The report is based on the AdvancED standards, which serve as the foundation of the accreditation process. In order to earn and maintain accreditation, school systems must meet the AdvancED standards, engage in a process of continuous improvement, and demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.

The Standards Assessment Report engages the school system in an in-depth assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. In completing the report, the school system identifies the data, information, evidence, and documented results that validate that it is meeting each standard. This self assessment helps the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

The Standards Assessment Report also serves as the primary resource for the Quality Assurance Review Team, which uses the report to prepare for the visit to the school system. The team uses insights gathered from the report and information obtained during the on-site visit to provide feedback to the school system and to make an accreditation recommendation.

Structure of the Report

The Standards Assessment Report includes four sections: 1) a review of each standard; 2) a description of the school system's methods for quality assurance; and 3) conclusion.

The review of each standard is divided into three components: 1) the Indicators rubric; 2) focus questions; and 3) overall assessment rubric. The Indicators rubric enables the school system to assess the degree to which practices and/or processes are in place that indicate adherence to the standard and Indicators. For each Indicator, the school system may check if the practices and/or processes are highly functional, operational, emerging, or not evident. The school system should use the rubric as an opportunity to ask itself challenging questions and to respond with accurate answers geared toward self-improvement. After completing the rubric, the school system can quickly see areas of strength and opportunity. The section asks, "To what degree are the noted practices/processes in place?"

The focus questions allow the school system to expand on and think more deeply about the responses to the Indicators rubric. The focus questions provide an opportunity for the school system to describe the systematic and systemic processes that are in place to support its ability to meet the Indicators. The section asks, "How are the practices/processes implemented?"

The overall assessment describes how well the school system and its schools are implementing practices and/or processes and the impact these practices and/or processes have on student results and overall school effectiveness. The overall assessment helps the school system judge where it is in relation to each standard. The "operational"

level is required in order to demonstrate meeting the standard. The section asks, "How well are we meeting the standard overall?"

The description of the school system's methods for quality assurance should include an overview of the practices and methods the school system uses to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that the AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results.

The conclusion provides an opportunity for the district to share final insights and information.

Completion and Submission of the Report

This Standards Assessment Report is to be completed by the school system between six months and six weeks prior to hosting a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit. It is strongly recommended that a wide and broad cross-section of the school system's community participate in completing this report. The report will become the basis of the Quality Assurance Review Team's review.

Directions for Completing the Report

Follow the instructions to complete each section of the report. Be thorough and concise in your answers, focusing on quality and depth over quantity.

Demographics

# Elementary Schools:	2
# Middle Schools:	1
# High Schools:	2
# Other:	4
Grade(s):	PK,K,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12
Enrollment:	3696

Executive Summary

Please provide an overview of the school system's profile. Please include:

- The school system's vision and goals;
- A description of the programs and services (including number and type of schools) under the jurisdiction of the system;
- Demographic information about school system's community;
- A summary of student performance across the system;
- An overview of any major trends or issues impacting the school system; and
- A summary of the major strengths and needs of the school system.

Franklin County School System
Executive Summary of School System Profile

Provide an overview of the school system's profile. Please include:

1. The school system's vision and goals

Mission & Vision

The Franklin County School System subscribes to the belief that the primary function of the public schools is to promote the understanding, maintenance and improvement of the American way of life. To that end, the curriculum in the Franklin County Schools shall promote the development of democratic values and shall be based on a program of instruction in academic, technical subjects, fine arts, vocational/technical skills, citizenship, cultural development and enhancement of moral and spiritual values.

The mission of the Franklin County School System is to provide a learning environment for academic excellence where all students are challenged to think critically, take responsibility for their actions, connect to the community and reach their highest potential for future success to help them become life-long learners in the 21st century.

Our students, parents, teachers and community are committed to work together to foster a safe and caring environment where all students are given equal opportunities for success. We will strive to provide safe schools that are free of drugs, alcohol and violence.

The instructional program based on the Alabama Course of Study will provide a variety of effective learning opportunities for all students which prepare them for academic success and prepare them for work or college. Our goal is to continually improve our schools and student performance to meet the state's challenging student performance standards.

2. A description of the programs and services (including number and type of schools) under the jurisdiction of the system.

The Franklin County School System includes the following schools:

Belgreen High School - Pre-K - 12

Enrollment is currently 435 which includes 410 white and 25 Hispanic students. Free and reduced lunch percentage is 69.30 %.

East Franklin Jr. High School - K - 9

Enrollment is currently 188 which includes 166 white, 20 Hispanics and 2 other race students. Free and reduced lunch percentage is 69.02%

Phil Campbell Elementary School - Pre-K - 12

Enrollment is currently 488 which includes 459 white, 2 black, 23 Hispanics and 4 other race students. Free and reduced lunch percentage is currently 76.62%.

Phil Campbell High School - 7 - 12

Enrollment is currently 360 which includes 350 white, 9 Hispanics and 1 other race students. Free and reduced lunch percentage is currently 64.72%.

Red Bay High School - Pre-K - 12

Enrollment is currently 859 which includes 797 white, 38 Hispanics, 19 black and 5 other race students. Free and reduced lunch percentage is currently 57.5%.

Tharptown Elementary School - K - 6

Enrollment is currently 398 which includes 263 white, 129 Hispanics, 1 black, 5 other race students. Free and reduced lunch percentage is currently 82.61%

Tharptown High School - 7 - 12

Enrollment is currently 293 which includes 211 white, 75 Hispanics, 1 black and 6 other race students. Free and reduced lunch percentage is currently 76.45%.

Vina High School - K - 12

Enrollment is currently 330 which includes 327 white, 1 black and 2 other race students. Free and reduced lunch percentage is currently 70.91%.

The LEA also operates a Career Technical Center which is located adjacent to Belgreen High School with students from the other schools traveling there daily for classes.

The LEA has a Community Education Department located at Belgreen which operates an after school and summer program for elementary students, remediation services for high school students, credit recovery program, JAG (Jobs for Alabama Graduates), drug and alcohol resistance program and other educational programs. The community education program also provides services, support, personnel and materials for students, their parents and community members.

The LEA is considered a high poverty system with a system percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunches of 69.09%.

The LEA has two central office locations, the main central office, located in Russellville and an annex located in Phil Campbell which houses administrative, transportation, maintenance and support offices.

The LEA had a total of 3,351 students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12 enrolled during the 2010-2011 school year based on the STI 40-day enrollment report. Of this total 89 % of the student population was white, 9 % Hispanic, 1 % black and 1 % of other groups.

Programs and activities:

1. Belgreen High School, Phil Campbell Elementary School and Red Bay High School operate pre-kindergarten programs for four year old students
2. All schools serve special needs students which are served through the special education program
3. Each school except Phil Campbell High School is a Schoolwide Title I School
4. TRACKS After School and Summer Program for elementary students is provided at all schools that serve elementary students
5. Two schools, Tharptown Elementary School and Tharptown High School have Hispanics comprising approximately one third of the student population. Of this percentage, a large number of the group qualifies for E L L (English as a Second Language)
6. High Schools operate ACCESS distance learning program for high school students which allows us to expand and curriculum and offer additional courses
7. High Schools operate a local distance learning program which provides classes between the schools from inside the system
8. Phil Campbell Elementary School is an A R I (Alabama Reading Initiative) Program Demonstration Site
9. All elementary schools participate in the A R I (Alabama Reading Initiative) Program
10. All elementary schools participate in the A M S T I (Alabama Math, Science & Technology Initiative) Program
11. Every school except East Franklin Jr. High School has a full-time school nurse to serve the needs of students
12. All high schools participate in the state's J A G (Jobs for Alabama Graduates) program which helps students prepare for work and helps them prepare to meet graduation requirements
13. High school students are served by the Career Technical Education Program which is centrally located at Belgreen High School. Students are bussed to the center for classes from the other high schools. Programs offered include welding, building construction, small engine repair, auto body repair, health occupations and business office education.
14. The LEA operates an E L L (English Language Learners) & Migrant Education programs to serve the needs of these student subgroups
15. All of the high schools operate a dual enrollment college/high school credit program in conjunction with Northwest-Shoals Community College.
16. NW-SCC offers a dual enrollment welding program for high school students and adults in conjunction with the Career Technical Center located at Belgreen
17. The LEA operates a pre-school special education program
18. The LEA operates a gifted program for elementary students
19. The LEA provides a speech pathology program for elementary students
20. The LEA operates a summer credit recovery program for high school students to provide opportunities to make-up/earn credit for courses failed during the regular school year
21. A summer Camp Catch-Up program is operated to provide opportunities for remediation and enrichment for students in grades 3 - 8
22. The LEA works in conjunction with the local court system to provide an Early Warning Program for students who are truant.
23. The LEA provides home based web based learning/remedial programs for students in certain grade levels to

help them prepare for state assessments

24. Red Bay High School and Phil Campbell High School provide Agri-Science and Family & Consumer Science Programs for high school students

25. The LEA operates a year-round breakfast and lunch program at all schools through its Child Nutrition Program

26. The LEA operates a Community Education Program which is funded largely through grants. This department provides many programs and educational activities for students, their parents and for community members including C E R T (Community Emergency Response Teams) training and certification program, TRACKS After School Program for elementary students, drug resistance education program for all students and other programs.

27. Belgreen High School and Phil Campbell High School are on School Improvement Status due to graduation rate. Both schools have shown progress towards improvement and, hopefully, will soon reach clear SIP status.

28. All schools except East Franklin Jr. High School are served by full-time nurses.

29. The school system receives more than \$1 million per year in grants from outside sources. Grant money is used to fund the TRACKS after school and summer program, summer remedial/enrichment programs, credit recovery program, drug and alcohol resistance program, JAG (Jobs for Alabama Graduations), community education programs for adults and provides funds for additional instructional and support personnel and for technology, software, materials and equipment to supplement and support the instructional program.

3. Demographic information about the school system's community:

Franklin County is located in the northwest corner of the state. The county currently has a population of approximately 30,000 residents. The annual median income per household is slightly less than \$30,000. The county is located in the northwest corner of the state.

Russellville is the county seat and largest municipality in the county with a population of approximately 10,000 residents. Red Bay is the second largest town with a population of approximately 3,500 residents. Smaller towns include Phil Campbell, Vina and Hodges. The rest of the area is largely rural farmland.

Major industries located in the county include several manufacturing industries and a large Pilgrim's Pride chicken processing plant provides employment for a large number of area residents. Many locally owned poultry production farms in the community provide chickens and eggs for the Pilgrim's Pride plant. Tiffin Motor Homes, Gates Rubber Company, Sunshine Mills Pet Food Company, Clark Pulley, Distinctive Designs, G & G Steel, Wal-Mart and Sunshine Mobile Homes are the largest employers of non-skilled workers in the county. The school system is one of the largest employers in the county with around 500 workers.

Franklin County has two large T V A watershed lakes with campgrounds and other facilities which are used for fishing and recreation and which bring in many visitors to the area.

Russellville Hospital, Russellville Wellness Center and Red Bay Hospital along with several physicians' offices located in Russellville, Phil Campbell and Red Bay serve the medical needs of the residents of the county.

The Franklin County Commission governs the area through a five member commission representing districts of the county. The Franklin County Probate Judge heads the commission. The county commission provides law enforcement and a countywide solid waste collection system. The commission operates the emergency management agency, 911 services and oversees the local fire departments.

The towns of Phil Campbell, Red Bay, Vina and Hodge are governed by five member city councils and a mayor.

The Franklin County Sheriff's Department serves the county. Russellville, Red Bay and Phil Campbell operate city law enforcement programs. The county operates a 911 center and an emergency management agency. Several small volunteer fire departments and rescue squads serve the rural areas and Russellville, Red Bay and Phil Campbell operate city fire departments.

A county wide system provides water and gas services to residents. Internet service is now available in all areas of the county.

Northwest Shoals Community College, a two-year junior college has a campus located in the county at Phil Campbell. The University of North Alabama, the nearest four-year higher education institution, is located approximately 30 miles from the county in Florence. A technical college located at Hamilton, which is approximately 25 miles from Russellville, provides training for graduates who are interested in such courses.

The Franklin County School System serves the county. Russellville City School System serves the residents of that municipality.

The Franklin County School System has eight schools, a career technical center and a community education department. These entities include Belgreen High School, East Franklin Jr. High School, Phil Campbell Elementary School, Phil Campbell High School, Red Bay High School, Tharptown Elementary School, Tharptown High School, Vina High School, Franklin County Career Technical Center and the Franklin County Community Education Department.

Since much of the country is rural, schools are the focus of many of the smaller communities. The schools receive excellent support from the communities. Community events are often held at the schools and many local residents enjoy participating in school events and sports activities.

Education in Franklin County began with the first settlements in the area when children were taught in one of the many small one-room schools which dotted the countryside. It has been estimated that during the late 1800's some 40-50 such school existed in the county serving the school aged children living in their community.

As the 1900's began, these small one-room schools were gradually replaced by new consolidated schools established in the larger communities and growing towns with transportation provided by the school system. This consolidation continued through the 1950's and 1960's when transportation and roads improved making it possible for children to travel more than walking distance to attend school.

Modern high schools developed from the older schools as renovations and construction projects provided the facilities necessary to meet the needs in the more populated areas near the towns. High schools have survived over the years including Belgreen High School, Phil Campbell High School, Red Bay High School and Vina High School. Two junior high schools, Tharptown Jr. High School and East Franklin Jr. High School also thrived and continued to serve their communities as the last few junior high schools closed in the mid 1970's when enrollment shrank to such low numbers and operation costs were too high so it was not feasible to keep the schools open.

The Franklin County School System consisted of four high schools and two junior high schools for almost three decades.

The career technical center which was established in 1975 to provide vocational training classes for high school students.

In 2005, Phil Campbell High School was divided to become two schools - Phil Campbell Elementary School and Phil Campbell High School.

The following year, in 2006, Tharptown Jr. High School was expanded to become Tharptown Elementary School and Tharptown High School to better serve the growing number of students who have chosen this as their school. Tharptown's student enrollment increased from just below 200 in 1980 to more than 300 students in grades K – 6 and approximately 150 students in grades 7 – 10 during the 2006-07 school year.

With the addition of tenth grade in 2006-07, eleventh grade in 2007-08 and twelfth grade in 2008-09 the first senior class graduated from the Tharptown High School in 2009. A \$5 million construction project provided classrooms and sports facilities for the new school. Construction began on the new high school buildings at Tharptown in 2006 and the project was expected to be complete in 2008.

Each of the original four high schools has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for many years. Newly established Tharptown High School and Tharptown Elementary School and East Franklin Jr. High School have not been accredited before.

The LEA is considered a high poverty level system with 69.09 % of students qualifying for free or reduced lunches. Among the schools, the lowest student poverty rate is 57.50 % at Red Bay and the highest poverty rate among students is found at Tharptown High School which has a 82.61 % free/reduced lunch rate. There has been a large increase in the poverty level during that past 10 years, due largely to downturns in the local economy caused with the closing of a large number of local manufacturing plants and the failure of new, large employers to

locate in the area.

Some areas of the county have experienced an increase in population which has boosted school enrollment at some sites. Factors which have contributed to an increase in student enrollment over the past five years is the influx of Hispanics into the area over the past 10 years, the establishment of the Pilgrim's Pride Poultry Processing Plant located in the area and the consolidation and closing of schools in an adjoining county. Approximately one third of the Tharptown student population is Hispanic at this time.

With the exception of Tharptown schools, enrollment has decreased over the past decade in the other system schools. High local unemployment rates and the closing of some large garment and mobile home manufacturing industries in the area may have contributed to this decline.

An example of this decline can be found at Belgreen High School. The student enrollment at Belgreen was around 300 in the mid 1970's. In 2005, Belgreen had 525 students in grades K – 12. The school had approximately 450 students in 2010.

Phil Campbell's student enrollment has decreased over the past 10 years, from approximately 1000 students in 1997-98 to about 350 students enrolled in grades 7-12 at Phil Campbell High School. Phil Campbell Elementary School had an enrollment of about 500 students in 2010 serving students in grades pre-kindergarten through six.

Red Bay High School has also experienced a decrease in student enrollment over the past ten years, with approximately 1000 students in 1997-98. Today, Red Bay serves grades K – 12 with a student enrollment of approximately 820.

Vina High School's student enrollment has grown slightly over the past five years with 345 students grades K – 12 during the 2010-2011 school year.

East Franklin Jr. High School, our smallest school, serves approximately 190 students in grades K – 9. Approximately 75 % of East Franklin's graduates continue their high school education at nearby Phil Campbell High School making the small school a valuable asset to the school system. East Franklin has experienced a small increase in enrollment during the past five years of about 25 students.

The Franklin County Career Technical Center, located adjacent to Belgreen High School in the center of the county, serves approximately 200 students in grades 10 – 12 from the system's high schools.

The Franklin County School System currently has approximately 250 teachers/administrators and approximately 200 support personnel.

Over the past ten years, the system has used more than \$15 million state capital outlay and other funds to build a new K – 12 school complex at Belgreen High School including classroom buildings, a gymnasium and a cafeteria. Other facilities improvement projects recently completed include a media center and improvements on the gymnasium at Red Bay High School, the construction of a new school to house the high school at Tharptown which included classroom buildings and sports complexes, a cafeteria at Phil Campbell which serves both the elementary and high schools and a gymnasium and sports facility addition at Vina.

Through several grants, the system has been able to establish a LAN and provide connectivity including Internet and automated phone services. All schools have up-to-date computers in each classroom and they have computer labs for student and teacher use. Many classrooms have emergency telephone systems connecting them with the school office and other classrooms. Most teachers have LCD projectors, ELMOs, smart boards, etc. in the classroom to enhance the instructional program. A School Cast automated message system is used to keep all parents informed of emergency situations, school closings or to provide other information.

All system schools are high-poverty schools which qualifies them for discounts on telephone and Internet services through e-rate programs. This also provides funds through the Title programs including Title I programs which help low performing students improve their core academic skills, Title II which provides additional teaching units and high quality professional development for teachers, Title III which funds services for E L L students, Title IV, Safe & Drug Free Schools Program and Title VI which provides additional funds for materials and programs for rural and low income schools.

The school system operates an annual budget of slightly more than \$33.8 million, of which approximately 86 % is used in salaries for system instructional and support employees.

Due to the fact that the state has declared proration of more than 20 % total over the past two years and will continue during this present school year, school system finances, like most state school systems, is in poor

financial condition. However, there have been several new revenue sources which have boosted the system's budget and helped alleviate some of the financial problems.

The citizens of the county voted in the last general election to impose a temporary one-cent sales tax to use to make up some of the deficits experienced from proration. Proceeds from the tax are divided, 58.04 % for Franklin County Schools and 41.96 % for Russellville City Schools, based on student enrollment.

The tax went into effect June 2010. It was approved by the county commission to remain in effect for a two-year period. During the first six months, the tax has brought approximately \$1.2 million to the Franklin County School System and \$800,000 for the Russellville City School System. This money has been a big boost in times of proration to help the LEA meet its financial obligations.

The system has also benefited from the federal ARRA Stimulus funds which provided \$2.6 million to be used in providing personnel, equipment and materials to be used in the instructional programs of the schools.

Due to the efforts of the school system, approximately \$15 million in grants has been awarded over the past 12 years. This money has been used to make improvements in technology, to establish an after school program, to establish a distance learning program, to provide personnel and support for the instructional and student services programs and to fund drug resistance programs.

Annually the LEA receives approximately \$1.5 million through the federal programs which includes funding for special education program and federal Title programs.

The system received additional money from a sixteenth section lawsuit settlement which uncovered an error in the state's accounting of sales of natural resources from these land sections over the past 25 years. In conjunction with this, the system has received a total \$4,377,836.43 over the past six years which includes \$3,200,534.82 interest income for 16th sections owned by the LEA, \$812,886.54 in timber sales on 16th section land and \$364,415.07 in coal sales on the land parcels. This money has enabled the system to operate and meet its financial obligations until the three-year proration was imposed by the state. Since then, the system has borrowed money to meet its obligations.

It is hoped that the tax money along with additional funds from 16th section activities and with cutbacks made in the LEA during the past two years that the system will be able to weather the financial storm and soon see progress towards getting back on sound financial footing.

4. School Improvement Planning Process

The LEA expanded Tharptown Jr. High School to make it a 7 – 12 grade high school and divided Phil Campbell High School into a high school and a separate elementary school. Tharptown and East Franklin have not been accredited in the past and Phil Campbell was accredited as a K – 12 school. After several key personnel attended orientation concerning district accreditation process, system administrators and central office personnel met and discussed the possibility of seeking district accreditation.

That group decided to discuss the matter with school committees, faculty members and other stakeholders to get their input into the decision. System personnel also made contact with surrounding school systems that had or were going through the accreditation process to seek advise and gather data about the project.

Additional meetings were held both at the local school and system level to discuss the tasks involved and to develop a timeline for the process. A SACS leadership committee consisting of administrators, teachers and parents and community members was formed to conduct the self-study and prepare the SAR. Each school also appointed a school leadership or school improvement committee which worked on the local school plans and reviewed and provided input into the system level plan. Several meetings of the groups were held to study indepth the standards, to gather data, analyze data and to rate the LEA and schools on each standard.

As part of the LEA study, the schools were asked to complete the SAR for their individual school if the school did not have a current self-assessment that was based on these standards. Schools were also required to develop, implement and monitor the state required School Improvement Plan or Continuous Improvement Plan.

Mr. Jimmie Lawrence, state SACS director met with the SACS leadership committee to provide the required orientation. Additional meetings were held at the school and system level to analyze data, work on and develop the SAR and to discuss standards and requirements. Information from the meetings was disseminated to all

stakeholders through meetings held for that purpose.

Committees used meetings and e-mail to communicate and provide copies of completed materials and sections of the SAR. The committees reviewed the final report and offered additional suggestions for changes/improvements.

The completed SAR is a consensus compilation made by stakeholders and approved by the system administration. It provided an avenue for stakeholders to take an indepth look at all areas of the system and its programs and it served as a basis to identify our strengths and areas of need and to use data to develop effective improvement plans. It is now being used as a basis for school improvement decisions at the system and at the local school levels and it is instrumental in helping us strive toward and in accomplishing outcomes conducive to meeting the system's stated goals.

School Improvement /Continuous Improvement Plans were developed by all schools as part of the SACS and the Title I Program planning process. During the time period we have been completing the SACS study, the state has begun to require written continuous improvement plans for all schools. In previous years this was only required for low performing schools on School Improvement Status.

School Improvement Committees were formed of stakeholders representing each group at the local school level. The LEA level school improvement committee held several orientation meetings to provide technical assistance in plan requirements and development. The local schools completed data analysis and developed their plans based on need. The plans were reviewed and approved by the board of education and the Alabama State Department of Education.

Local schools discuss the plans with staff members and implement the CIP's as approved. Monthly the plans are reviewed and implementation is monitored closely by school administrators and LEA federal programs staff. Plans are revised at the beginning of each school year based on annual AYP reports, new student assessment and performance data analysis.

5. Student Assessment reports and comparisons

Current AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) and state student assessment results and comparison charts are available in the schools and at the LEA level.

At the present time, Belgreen High School is on School Improvement, Year 1 Status and Phil Campbell High School is completing their requirements to get off school improvement at the end of this school year. Both schools are on school improvement due to low graduation rates. All other schools are in Clear status at this time.

6. An overview of any major trends or issues impacting the system:

Major trends/issues impacting our school system include:

1. With the construction of a new high school at Tharptown, student enrollment there has exceeded expectations straining the capacity of the facilities. (An additional factor in the increase is the consolidation of and closing of schools in an adjoining system which made Tharptown a closer school for some families). Both the elementary school and the high school need additional classrooms, media centers and computer lab space.
2. Proration in state funds for the past two years have resulted in a deficit of more than \$3 million in funding to state foundation program. Proration is expected to continue during the FY 11 fiscal year which will result in the need to make up the loss of revenue to cover the systems financial obligations. This has forced the system to make cutbacks to many programs and to cut several personnel positions limiting the course offerings in some schools, eliminating some elective courses and leading to larger pupil-teacher ratios in some grade levels and in some core academic classes.
3. Mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act have caused a strain on the budget and on the schools in an effort to implement the regulations.

4. State guidelines and regulations for A Y P (Adequate Yearly Progress) have caused schools to make curriculum and instructional changes.
 5. Local unemployment rates remain high and have impacted student enrollment as families move out of the area to seek employment opportunities elsewhere.
 6. The system has been able to secure extra funds including more than \$1 million per year in grants, and approximately \$750,000 per year in receipts from 16th section land.
 7. A temporary one-cent sales tax which went into effect in January 2011 has a projected receipt of \$2.5 million per year for the system which will help the LEA meet its financial obligations and help pay back loans of \$5 million which were made during 2009-2010 to meet monthly operating expenses of the system.
 8. Federal ARRA stimulus funds of \$2.6 million have been used during the past two years to prevent some cuts in personnel and to provide funding for some instructional equipment and materials.
7. A summary of major strengths and needs of the school system:

Strengths

1. From our completed SACS standards analysis, no areas were identified with less than a rating of “3”. This indicates the LEA and our schools are at least average in all standards.
2. From the standards analysis, we have identified Teaching and Learning and Governance and Leadership as areas of strength.
3. Schools do a good job providing a high quality instructional and student support program within budget constraints.
4. Community and parent support is strong at all schools.
5. There is a high level of collaboration and cooperation among the schools as we seek to meet our shared vision and goals.
6. Funds from local one-cent sales tax are helping make up deficits brought about through state proration.
7. Technology improvements provide connectivity and access to resources, distance learning opportunities and communication as well as providing up-to-date technology in the classrooms to enhance the instructional program.
8. 97 % of core academic teachers currently meet Alabama’s Highly Qualified Teacher standards.
9. The instructional and student support program does an adequate job in meeting the needs of all student subgroups.
10. Despite budget constraints the LEA is able to provide extended learning opportunities for its students through the after school program, ACCESS distance learning program, JAG (Jobs for Alabama’s Graduates) program , dual high school/college enrollment program and the LEA’s distance learning program.

Needs

1. From our completed SACS standards analysis, no areas were identified with less than a rating of “3”. This indicates the LEA and our schools are at least average in all standards. But, we identified Resource and Support Systems and Stakeholder Communications and Relationships as areas we want to work to improve.
2. To work on securing additional funding for construction and facilities additions and other improvements to alleviate overcrowding in some schools.
3. To continue to develop and implement new instructional/remedial programs and instructional strategies to meet the needs of low performing students in identified deficient areas of reading and math.
4. To secure funding for expansion of curriculum to include more core academic and elective course offerings for students in grades 7 – 12
5. To introduce strategies, programs and services to help prevent student drop outs and to increase graduation rates at all the high schools.
6. To continue to improve our technology infrastructure and to continue plans to update instructional technology

used in the instructional program.

Standard 1. Vision & Purpose

STANDARD: The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a purpose and direction that is shared system-wide. The leadership establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the system's vision that is supported by system and school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and district effectiveness. The system's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

1.1 Establishes a vision and purpose for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Leadership demonstrates stakeholder support

Mission Statement visible throughout the district

Policies/Procedures manuals/handbooks demonstrating stakeholder involvement in development of mission

Stakeholder perception data used to develop mission

1.2 Communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Handbooks include vision, mission

Meetings incorporate elements of vision, mission

Website/page includes vision, mission

1.3 Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District and school improvement planning incorporates vision, mission

District Improvement Plan includes vision, mission

Goals distributed through publications and communication

1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community :

Operational

Evidence Provided:

District Improvement Plan

District profile is used during parent/community meetings

District profile is used during staff meetings

Publications, brochures, handbooks

1.5 Ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District and school improvement planning demonstrates alignment with vision, mission

District Curriculum demonstrates alignment with vision, mission

District Improvement Plan demonstrates alignment of vision, mission with teaching and learning

Policies on instructional practices demonstrate alignment with vision, mission

Student report cards demonstrate alignment with vision, mission

1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes for strategic planning demonstrate review

Strategic planning process demonstrates review by stakeholders

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for establishing and building understanding of and commitment to the vision statement among the school system and its stakeholders?

The vision, mission statement and objectives are periodically reviewed by stakeholders including administrators, teachers, students, parents and community members to determine if changes/updates are necessary.

This is accomplished through:

- a. Discussion during faculty meetings
- b. Meetings held with parents and other stakeholders
- c. Committee meetings
- d. Surveys completed by stakeholders
- e. Information posted on LEA website which invites viewers to post questions, comments and suggestions
- f. Notices of meetings held for this purpose disseminated through memos, e-mail and other forms of communication invite stakeholders to take part in the process

Current mission statements are posted in classrooms and other areas of the schools. Teachers refer to mission statement and objectives periodically during the instructional process. Mention of the school's mission and objectives is made during meetings and programs with parents and other stakeholders.

The school's mission statement is published in various documents and in brochures, the system's policy handbook, student handbooks and handouts/programs which are provided during school events and activities. The mission statement and objectives are posted on the schools' and system's website. Visitors to the website are invited to submit questions, suggestions or comments about content.

2. What is the system's process for maintaining and using information that describes the school system, its programs, services, and schools and their performance?

The school's profile is developed in conjunction with stakeholders, the local chamber of commerce and other governmental agencies. This information is frequently updated by the entities that maintain records. The profile is posted on appropriate websites maintained by the school system, various educational groups and the state department of education.

This information is published in various plans and products used by the school system including Title I plans, School Improvement Plans, Continuous Improvement Plans required by the state department of education. The profile is given to parents through the annual school report cards and shared during parent meetings.

Annual reports of student assessment results are published in the local newspapers and shared with teachers through inservice meetings and teacher training sessions planned for data analysis and planning for instruction. Parents receive reports and information through reports/information sent home with students who participate in assessments. The schools AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) Report is shared with stakeholders and is available through the school's annual report card which is distributed to parents, available at the school through the guidance counselors, on the school system website and from the state department of education's website. Copies of allowable information, data and reports are provided to any parent or stakeholder who requests the information. School system personnel are available to answer questions as they arise and to assist parents with learning about and understanding their child's current performance levels, their learning goals and their instructional program. Parents are provided information about programs/activities and tips to help low performing students improve their

core academic skills through parent conferences and Parent Expos held for this purpose. Parents are invited to participate in meetings and surveys to provide their input into the process.

3. How does the leadership ensure that the system's vision, purpose, and goals guide the work of the school system and its schools?

Discussion of the school's mission and objectives through faculty meetings, memos, e-mails and other forms of communication keep the topic foremost in the minds of the instructional staff. By having the mission and objectives prominently displayed on the LEA website and in the classrooms, everyone has the opportunity to continuously review and be aware of the information. Administrators continuously monitor the instructional program and the performance of students to ensure the school program is successful in meeting the needs of students. Teachers are reminded often through faculty meetings, memos and e-mails of the importance of reviewing this information regularly with students, parents and other stakeholders.

4. What process is used to ensure that the vision and purpose of the school system remain current and aligned with the system's expectations in support of student learning and the effectiveness of the school system and its schools?

The school's mission statement and objectives is reviewed by the faculty and other stakeholders each school year to determine if changes are necessary. This is accomplished through:

- a. Discussion during faculty meetings
- b. Meetings held with parents and other stakeholders
- c. Committee meetings
- d. Surveys completed by stakeholders
- e. Reminders posted on the LEA website
- f. Reminders of meetings and opportunities for input disseminated through e-mails, memos and other communication systems
- g. Discussion at meetings and activities planned for parents and other stakeholders at the school and system level

Input from these sources is used to determine is changes are needed in order to keep the vision and purpose of the school current and properly aligned with expectations for learning and school effectiveness.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school system has achieved a wide commitment by all groups of stakeholders to a shared purpose and direction. The system and its schools have clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the system's vision that is fully supported by system and school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance, system and school effectiveness. The vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

Standard 2. Governance & Leadership

STANDARD: The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the system's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders function with clearly defined authority and responsibility and encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for system and school improvement among stakeholders. The system's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system operates under the jurisdiction of a governing authority that:

2.1 Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system :

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District-wide Staff and/or student handbooks

Governance Policy handbooks: board, district, school

Governing authority affirms understanding of their role in the operation of the school/district

Local, state, and federal policy handbooks

Organizational chart

Procedural policies: emergencies, contact information, calling tree, discipline, due process, logistics, placement and transfer

Staff and students affirm their understanding of emergency and operational procedures

Stakeholders affirm understanding of operational procedures

Students and staff affirm their understanding of discipline policies and due process

2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff are knowledgeable about leadership prerogatives

District staff are knowledgeable about organizational chart

District staff demonstrate knowledge about due process

Governing Board Policies demonstrate leadership prerogatives

Organizational chart

Policies demonstrate protocols for remediation and due process

2.3 Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff are knowledgeable about curriculum standards

District staff demonstrates knowledge and use of curriculum standards in the teaching and learning process

District staff responsible for the implementation of state and/or federal programs are knowledgeable about compliance

Documentation of adherence to ethical business practices

Documentation of compliance with all regulations regarding copyright law, intellectual property, and international restrictions

Documentation of State and Federal Compliances and Assurances, including NCLB/Title I, EEO, Title IX

Documentation of utilization of all requirement elements of curriculum standards

Documentation with all regulations that apply to accreditation by NCA CASI, SACS CASI, or AdvancED

Stakeholders affirm compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity practices and procedures

Stakeholders affirm compliance with ethical business practices

2.4 Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff and governing board members affirm their knowledge of governing board policies and procedures

District staff and governing board members affirm their participation in orientation and training

Policies and procedures for governing board training and orientation

2.5 Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Documentation of adherence to ethical business practices

Policies and procedures for fiscal planning: short-term and long-range

Stakeholders affirm compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity practices and procedures

Stakeholders affirm compliance with ethical business practices

2.6 Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff are knowledgeable about due process and complaint resolution

District staff are knowledgeable about access to legal counsel

Documentation of access to legal counsel

Documentation of resolutions of any complaints

Staff and students affirm their involvement in the accreditation process

2.7 Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff affirm knowledge and support for the district's fiscal responsibility

District staff affirm knowledge of district's insurance carrier, policies, and procedures

Policies and procedures for investments

Policies and procedures for protecting assets and financial resources

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system has leadership that:

2.8 Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness :

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Advisory Committee: agenda, minutes

District staff affirm the use of student performance and organizational effectiveness data for planning

District Staff meetings: agenda, minutes, decision points

Evaluation results: professional development, efficiency, effectiveness, instructional programming, etc.

Record of student performance data analysis

Staff and students affirm their involvement in the accreditation process

Student performance data are used during district staff meetings

Student performance data are used for extra-curricular planning

2.9 Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Accreditation team members are representative of staff and students

Artifacts displayed throughout the district demonstrate inclusion of all stakeholder communities

Calendar, agendas, minutes of stakeholder meetings

Committee members are representative of all stakeholder groups

Parent/community compacts

Policies for staff/student leadership opportunities outside the district environment

Record of Advisory Committees: calendars, membership, minutes

Record of co-curricular organizations and activities: calendars, membership, sponsors

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm a sense of belonging and engagement

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in a district-wide decision-making process

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in the accreditation process

Stakeholders affirm their involvement on committees

Website provides forum for feedback and dialogue

2.10 Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Budget reflects allocation of support for student performance targets

District staff are knowledgeable about student performance targets

District staff are knowledgeable about the alignment of resources to support student performance

District-wide walk-about demonstrate monitoring of instructional practices

Guidelines outline expectations for instructional standards

Guidelines outline expectations for student performance

Organizational chart reflects allocation of support for student performance targets

Policies demonstrate established student performance targets, measures, and strategies

2.11 Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Accreditation team members are representative of stakeholder groups

Calendar, agendas, minutes of stakeholder meetings

Committee members are representative of all stakeholder groups

Parent/community compacts

Policies and procedures established for the inclusion of all stakeholders into appropriate district-wide decision making processes

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in a district-wide decision-making process

Stakeholders affirm their involvement on committees

2.12 Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Artifacts displayed throughout the district demonstrate inclusion of all stakeholder communities

District staff are knowledgeable about the results of a community satisfaction survey

Record of Advisory Committees: calendars, membership, minutes

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm their satisfaction with their level of involvement

2.13 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff are knowledgeable about access to and participation in a professional growth program

District staff are knowledgeable about the criteria, timeline, process, procedures, and dispositions by which they will be evaluated

Documentation of salary schedules

Handbooks demonstrate staff evaluation system

New staff orientation materials

Policies demonstrate evaluation criteria, timelines, and termination processes

Policies demonstrate professional growth opportunities

Professional development plan for all staff

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school system and its schools?

Each school is under the governance of the school system's board approved policy and procedures manual. This document is amended through board action as need arises.

Student handbooks which are updated and produced annually include appropriate information from the policy and procedures manual are distributed to students and parents. Students and parents must sign and return a form which indicates that have been given a handbook and agree to abide by the provisions.

Students are provided orientation at the beginning of the school year which includes instruction about policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school. This orientation includes meetings held with the faculty and administration, instruction provided in the classrooms and, in some cases, individual instruction provided by administrators.

Information is also provided on the school's website, through fliers and signs posted in the schools and the central offices.

2. What process does the system's leadership use to evaluate system effectiveness and its impact on student performance?

Annual school report cards are provided to instructional staff and parents that includes analysis of student performance on state assessments.

The schools' annual AYP Reports are compared to previous years' reports to determine if progress is being made and if the schools are meeting their goals.

Reports from state student assessments are analyzed and compared among the schools and among the surrounding school systems. Reports are provided to stakeholders through the LEA's website, through meetings held at the schools and on the system level and through faculty meetings and discussions.

When data is received about student performance on state assessments, faculty members analyze the results of the current year's assessments and compare it to previous years performance to determine trends and levels of performance. This information is shared with teachers through faculty meetings, inservice training sessions and through other communication. Areas of strength and weakness are determined and discussion is held that leads to plans being developed to improve below average areas of performance. Teachers track individual student progress from test-to-test to determine if performance is improving. Students who demonstrate below average performance are provided remediation and tutoring to help them improve.

Data from the annual reports is used to develop the schools' Continuous Improvement Plan each year. This plan is implemented and closely monitored throughout the school year. From year-to-year data is compared to determine progress towards meeting the state's challenging student and school performance goals. Plans are on file in each school office for inspection.

Stakeholders including students, parents and community members are invited to participate in school surveys each year as part of the CIP and as part of the Title I Parent Involvement Program. Data is analyzed and shared with stakeholders at meetings held for this purpose.

3. In what ways are stakeholders, including system and school staff, given opportunities to provide leadership and to contribute to the decision-making process?

Staff members and other stakeholders are invited to serve on appropriate local and district level committees. Discussions are held in faculty meetings in which input from the instructional staff is used in making decisions that affect the learning process. Staff members are encouraged to participate in appropriate professional development and training activities which are provided to help develop leadership. Staff members are often asked to work with and mentor student groups to provide leadership in helping these young people develop their leadership skills.

Parents are invited to participate in meetings, serve on appropriate committees and provide input through surveys and questionnaires. Parents are also invited to use the e-mail feature of the system website and the school website to provide input. Parents participate in annual parent-teacher conference day activities, Parent Expos, school orientation meetings and other meetings held for them.

4. What policies and processes are in place to ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation?

The LEA has a non-discrimination policy which is strictly enforced. The school system's overall program is examined annually and changes made to ensure equity of learning opportunities for all students.

Innovation is supported through changes made in the school's curriculum to ensure student needs are being met. Programs and services are provided for all student subgroups and efforts are made to include all students in appropriate learning activities, programs and extra curricular activities. Students receive counseling and assistance in planning their high school course work and guidance in setting goals and working to meet those goals.

Each school operates a PST (Pupil Support Team) which deals with individual students who are having problems meeting their learning goals. The PST works with the student, parents and teachers to provide appropriate and effective activities and programs to help the student improve their school performance. The LEA operates an Early Warning Program which works with students and parents and the local court system for those who have truancy problems.

New academic courses are added and new learning opportunities provided for high school students through programs such as the dual enrollment program, the LEA's distance learning program, the state's ACCESS Distance Learning Program. Elementary students participate in the A R I (Alabama Reading Initiative) and AMSTI (Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative) programs. Students in grades K – 6 are encouraged to take advantage of the TRACKS after school program for tutoring and homework help and summer programs including math and reading camps, Camp Catch-Up and the summer TRACKS program.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school system has leaders who are advocates for the system's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction, lend support, and systematically allocate resources for systemic and sustainable implementation of curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders ensure collaboration and shared responsibility for system and school improvement among stakeholders with clearly defined expectations for each stakeholder group. The leaders provide stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership. The system's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation and are deeply embedded in the way the system and its schools functions.

Standard 3. Teaching & Learning

STANDARD: The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Impact Statement: Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The system ensures that teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process; provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations; and give students feedback to improve their performance.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
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Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

3.1 Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly- defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Communication of NCLB performance targets

Curriculum pacing guides

District staff/others meet regularly to discuss student progress and remediation

District staff/others meetings highlight discussions of student learning expectations

District-wide curriculum committee: review cycle, adoption/approval policies/criteria, membership

District-wide master schedule; hours of instruction

Policies on grading criteria

Policy on credit requirements for program completion

Special program promotion, completion requirements

Student Handbook outlines student learning expectations

Students affirm their knowledge of what is expected of them

Textbooks and text selection criteria are aligned to learning goals, curriculum

3.2 Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Samples of student work

Student mentoring programs

Students affirm their involvement in their own learning

3.3 Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Assessment data

District staff/others can identify research used to align instruction

District staff/others meet to analyze data and align instruction

District staff/others meet to review current research

District staff/others meetings regularly include data analysis

Grade reports

Professional development calendar and topics

Surveys

Transcripts, certificates

3.4 Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes of staff/grade level/department/program meetings

Cross-content curriculum guides

District staff/others meet to share best practices

District staff/others meetings regularly include discussions about effective instructional design and delivery

Guidance that promotes a variety of instructional design and delivery strategies

Professional development plans

Professional learning opportunities focus on best practice instruction

Professional organization membership

3.5 Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Curriculum includes attention to diversity

District staff are knowledgeable about state and national curriculum standards

District staff are representative of the school and community demographics

Graduation requirements

Master schedule

Policies that reflect attention to issues of equity

Promotion, graduation criteria

Standards-based curriculum: state and national standards

Students affirm that there are opportunities to excel

3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Instructional calendar: days, hours

Lesson plans are followed during teacher absence

Master schedule

Policies and guidelines that demonstrate that all program requirements are met

Policies demonstrate that substitute teachers are responsible for delivery instruction

Staff affirm that their instructional time is protected

3.7 Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes of staff meetings indicating vertical and horizontal articulation

Articulation agreements between agencies

Content-specific staff are knowledgeable about each other's course syllabus

District staff are knowledgeable about student learning expectations of previous and subsequent grade levels

Policies and guidelines granting dual-credit, transfer of credit

3.8 Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning :

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

After-school programs

Community-based programs

Counseling programs: curriculum, schedules, staffing

District staff affirm that there are multiple opportunities for students to get support

Individualized Development/Career Plans

Online support

Policies for student orientation, interventions, remediation

Schedule of opportunities, activities that support special learning needs

Students affirm that they have opportunities to explore their interests and career options

Students affirm that they have opportunities to get support for their school experience

Supplemental educational services: NCLB tutorial

Wrap-around programs

3.9 Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Database of student behavioral incidents

District staff affirm that they are involved in promoting positive school climate

District staff/others meetings provide time for discussions about climate

Guidance on team-teaching is a regular part of the instructional program

Parents/community indicate that the school/district focuses on positive school/district climate

Peer intervention programs; peer counseling

Policies for student behavior, remediation, due process, appeals

Reward system for positive behavior

Stakeholder Compact: adult and student expectations

Stakeholder satisfaction survey data

Students affirm that they are involved in promoting positive school climate

3.10 Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas and minutes from school board meetings (they have to approve the curriculum changes)

Application to seek new course approval and implementation

Calendar of curriculum committee meetings

District staff affirm that they are involved in the curriculum review and revision process

District staff are knowledgeable about the timeline and process for curriculum review

District staff stays informed of curricular changes in other entities (neighboring districts, state, federal, organizations)

Local school staff affirm that they are involved in the curriculum review and revision process

Parents/community affirm that they have opportunities to engage in the curriculum review and revision process

3.11 Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Budget allocating appropriate funds for technology - software, hardware, and infrastructure

Calendar and schedule of technology services to students

District staff affirm that technology supports their curriculum and instructional programs

Facilities map indicating technology services/lab

Staffing chart demonstrating allocation of appropriate technology staff

Students and staff affirm that technology is embedded within the teaching and learning process

Technology staff/services demonstrate their involvement in support of student achievement

Focus Questions:

1. How does the system ensure the alignment and articulation of curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments in support of the expectations for student learning?

Teachers participate in professional development activities that helps them align the instructional program with the state assessment standards and objectives. Lesson plans and classroom instruction are closely monitored to determine if the instructional program is following the Alabama Course of Study standards and Alabama student assessment program standards.

LEA curriculum guides were developed by teacher teams which worked together to align the local curriculum with the Alabama Course of Study, Alabama student assessment program standards and the locally adopted textbooks for each subject area and grade level. These guides are revised when new standards are adopted by the state or when new textbooks are adopted. Each teacher receives a copy of these guides and copies are posted on the LEA's website.

Administrators perform regular and frequent walk-throughs to observe the instructional program and to make sure teachers are on task and using instructional strategies and activities that reflect the objectives and standards from these guides. Teachers are evaluated using PEPE or Educate Alabama program to determine if they are providing an effective instructional program.

Faculty meetings including subject area and grade level meetings are held regularly to discuss teaching objectives and strategies for instruction.

Student assessment results are analyzed from test-to-test and plotted on charts to determine weak areas of the instructional program. Teachers work together to develop activities and to implement programs to improve these weak areas

2. In what ways does the system promote and support the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that facilitate achievement for all students?

All programs and instructional materials that are purchased with LEA funds must meet the Scientific Research Based requirement. Before new materials/programs are adopted, documentation is required about the SRB status of the items.

Vendors provide demonstrations and documentation of the effectiveness of new programs and materials during meetings held for this purpose.

Textbooks are adopted from the state approved list and companies provide samples and hold textbook fairs for LEA staff to demonstrate their programs before adoption.

Student performance is monitored from test-to-test to determine if progress is being made towards meeting the state's challenging student performance standards. Use of SRB programs and materials is closely tracked and compared with student performance levels before and after use of the programs and instructional strategies. If improvements in student performance are evident, it is assumed the use of the programs and/or instructional strategies may have contributed to the positive increase in student performance.

3. What processes are implemented to ensure that all staff members are well-prepared to support and implement the district's expectations for student learning?

Teachers are provided orientation for all new programs. Teachers participate in professional development activities that include discussion and orientation of the Alabama Course of Study, LEA Curriculum guides, Alabama state student assessment standards and on the analysis and use of student assessment data in the instructional/remedial program.

Administrators require lesson plans and monitor their use in the instruction program. Administrators perform regular and frequent walk-throughs to observe the instructional program and to make sure teachers are on task and using instructional strategies and activities that reflect the objectives and standards from these guides. Teachers are evaluated using PEPE or Educate Alabama program to determine if they are providing an effective instructional program.

Lesson plans are coordinated with the Alabama Course of Study and LEA curriculum guides for each subject area. Plans are submitted and monitored and classroom observations completed to determine if teachers are implementing the curriculum.

Teacher applicants are screened to determine if they have completed appropriate pre-service training.

4. How does the system ensure that all students and staff have access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services?

Students are encouraged to use the instructional programs which are web based at school or at home. Computer labs and mobile computer labs have been set up at each school and classes are scheduled on a regular basis to use them. Computers are available in all classrooms and in the schools' media centers for student use.

The schools' media centers are open during the school day and accessible to all students. Each librarian schedules classes and provides flex time for teachers to schedule additional class time as needed. The librarian's program

orientation and assistance for students in using computers in the learning process.

Teachers have been trained and encouraged to use the computer labs in their instructional program. All teacher have participated in professional development about the technology standards they are required to teach.

High school students at all schools are provided opportunities to take computer based courses through the state's ACCESS distance learning program or the LEA's local distance learning program. High School students at all schools are enrolled in U S Test Prep which is a web based program that prepares or remediates them for the graduation exam standards. Some students are enrolled in ACT online which prepares students for the ACT college entrance exam.

Elementary students in grades 2 - 8 at all schools in selected grades are enrolled in Study Island, a web based program which prepares/remediates them on standards of the ARMT (Alabama Reading and Math Test) state assessment and on the ASA (Alabama Science Assessment). This program can be used at school or at home by the students to help them prepare or review state assessment standards.

Students and their parents are encouraged to use the LEA's and the school's websites to stay updated on information related to the schools and the instructional program. The student handbook, LEA policy manual, forms, student assessment reports, contact information and messages are included on the website.

Parents and students are notified of school closings and receive messages from the schools about activities and events through the School Cast Telephone notification system which automatically calls up to three phone numbers per student when in use.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school system implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides multiple opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The system has a formalized process to align instructional practices with the curriculum and demonstrates results through systemic and sustainable implementation across the system. Teachers use proven, research-based, instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process and encourage students to take ownership of their learning. Teachers consistently provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students frequent feedback using a variety of methods to improve their performance.

Standard 4. Documenting & Using Results

STANDARD: The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and system effectiveness.

Impact Statement: A school system is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly-defined performance measures. The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, identify gaps between expectations for student learning and student performance, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to system and school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, system and school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

4.1 Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and bias free :

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

All stakeholders are knowledgeable about behavioral standards

All stakeholders are knowledgeable about grading and appeals

All stakeholders are knowledgeable about learning expectations and targets for student performance

Assessment system that records multiple assessments

Assessment system that safeguards validity, confidentiality, identification

Calendar of assessment activities

Database that records graduation, completion, GPA, placement, retention rates

Dedicated unit/staff for assessment and data reporting

District staff use data to inform policies and practice

Online assessment system

Policies outline administration of multiple assessments and their purpose

Policies that outline targets for behavioral standards: attendance, discipline

Policies that outline targets for student performance and are aligned to state/national standards

Record of multiple assessments administered, including program-specific required assessments

Special database for career preparation, special education, bilingual education programs

Staff affirm the use of multiple measures for student performance

Stakeholders are familiar with the administration and purpose of multiple assessments

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about the assessment schedule

Stakeholders implement multiple assessment system

Student/Staff Handbook that outlines grading scales, syllabus criteria, and appeal process

The development and administration of multiple assessments consider limited-language learners, students with disabilities, and multiple learning styles

4.2 Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes from staff meetings indicate use of data to drive instructional planning discussions

Agendas, minutes from staff meetings indicate utilization of data systems

Criteria for evaluation of staff performance include the use of data for instructional planning

Criteria for feedback on performance

District staff affirm their understanding of how data are used to evaluate their effectiveness

District staff are knowledgeable about how to use student performance data for the purpose of instructional planning

District staff demonstrate the use of data when planning guidelines for instruction, through vertical and horizontal articulation

District staff meet regularly to discuss student work

District staff utilize assessment data for the purpose of instructional and program planning

Student performance data reports, charts, graphs indicate system-wide use of data for instructional planning

Students affirm knowledge about their learning expectations

4.3 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Data from community/business

Data from multiple surveys indicate wide scale use of data to analyze instructional and organizational effectiveness

Database that records graduation, post-graduate engagement

District staff utilize business and community data to guide program planning

District staff utilize perception data from surveys to guide program planning

Stakeholders affirm their familiarity with student performance and organizational effectiveness

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in meetings in which the topic of student performance and organizational effectiveness were highlighted

4.4 Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes from meetings where student performance and school effectiveness were highlighted

Criteria that establishes student performance data as a component of parent-teacher conferences

District staff affirm the use of various communication methods to report student performance

Newsletters demonstrate communication of student performance and school effectiveness

Stakeholders affirm the use of various communication methods to report student performance

4.5 Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agenda, minutes of meetings in which comparative data were highlighted

District staff affirm their involvement in meetings in which comparative data were highlighted

Reports that outline comparable data analysis - across programs

Reports that outline comparable data analysis - across schools, districts, states, nationally

4.6 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Data reports disaggregate student performance growth

Data reports include behavioral and environmental data

Data reports utilize identified growth model that is valid, reliable, and psychometrically appropriate

Data reports verify growth in student performance

District staff can identify reasons why student performance has increased/decreased

District staff can identify strategies for increasing student performance

Stakeholders can speak to and support the growth data

4.7 Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff affirm their comfort with the level of data accuracy and security

Policies that outline the conditions for safeguarding and transferring transcripts

Policies that safeguard accuracy and security of all data

Reports that satisfy local, state, and national requirements

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about the conditions under which transcripts are safeguarded and transferred

Stakeholders indicate that they have seen reports that satisfy local, state, and national requirements

Focus Questions:

1. How is the assessment system currently used throughout the school system and its schools to guide analysis of changes in student performance?

Student performance on state assessments is tracked from test-to-test manually by the schools' staff. Performance of groups and individual students is compared from test-to-test to determine if progress is being made towards reaching the state's challenging student core academic performance standards. From this information plans are made for instruction and remediation.

Student performance is tracked during the school year from performance on pre-tests for some of the state assessments and on other assessments.

Results of student assessments are analyzed to pinpoint specific skills areas students are performing below average in and teachers use this information to provide individual remediation and tutoring. Students enrolled in remedial classes and those who choose to participate in the after school program are provided additional instruction, remediation and tutoring on their deficient skills.

Data from state assessments is charted, analyzed and used in the development of the Continuous Improvement Plan for each school. Weak areas are noted and plans include interventions and activities which are implemented in an effort to improve these areas.

Student reports are frequently and regularly analyzed from each state assessment and from remedial and instructional programs and from remedial/tutoring software/web based programs to help track progress individual students are making towards mastering the standards, objectives and skills. From this analysis, plans are made and programs implemented to help these students improve their core academic skills and skills they will be tested on through the state assessments.

2. What are you doing to ensure that assessment results are timely, relevant, and communicated in a way that can be used by the system, its schools, and stakeholders to aid the performance of individual students?

The LEA's website includes student assessment results charts.

Parents receive student progress reports provided through the assessment program. Student assessment information is discussed in parent meetings and in committee meetings held with stakeholders throughout the school year. School staff meet with parents when below average performance is evident to explain the deficits and to work with the parents and students to develop a plan to improve skills areas of poor performance.

Results of the state assessments are reported in the local newspapers and on local television stations.

School guidance counselors meet with students and parents individually to explain and discuss student performance and progress. They also inform parents when students are failing to meet standards and they provide information about available programs and interventions to help students improve their core academic skills.

Teachers receive student assessment results, analysis matrixes and charts and other relevant information as soon as possible after the data is received. Teachers participate in inservice at the beginning of the school year in which student assessment data is presented and discussed.

3. How are data used to understand and improve overall effectiveness of the school system and its schools?

The schools' CIPs are developed from student assessment data comparisons from year-to-year. The instructional program is developed and programs implemented with the goal of improving areas of low performance and to help all students make progress towards meeting the state's challenging student academic performance standards. Weak skills areas are identified and programs and activities developed or purchased and implemented to meet these needs. Teacher training is provided to help them improve the instructional program and to work effectively with low performing students. CIPs are revised annually in an effort to improve overall school effectiveness.

Annual reports are shared with stakeholders and the public. Student assessment reports, AYP reports and assessment data comparisons are frequently used in planning for improvement and in planning the instructional/remedial/tutorial programs of the school. Decisions on purchases of new programs and instructional materials are made consideration of this data. This information is also used in developing plans for professional development for teachers and staff.

4. How are staff members across the system and its schools trained to understand and use data to impact teaching and learning in the classroom?

Teachers are trained on the state student assessment standards they are required to include in the instructional program. They receive student assessment results, analysis matrixes and charts and other relevant information as soon as possible after the data is received. Grade level or subject area meetings are held frequently to discuss assessment data and student progress towards meeting their learning objectives.

Teachers participate in inservice at the beginning of the school year in which student assessment data is presented and discussed. School guidance counselors provide teacher training after assessment results are received to help teachers understand the data.

Teacher participate in regular faculty meetings held at the school in which student assessment data is analyzed and discussed. They work together to plan for effective instruction and they provide input into the development of instructional and remedial programs.

Teachers receive orientation when new programs are ready to be implemented.

Teachers participate in regular high quality professional development activities at the school, LEA and regional level on the subject.

Teachers who administer student assessments are trained and updated as new information is received. Staff members are encouraged to participate in local, regional and state meetings and programs held to provide orientation and training related to assessment, student performance, data analysis, etc.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school system uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results, including multiple measures of individual student achievement that assess higher order thinking skills and are of adequate technical quality. The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, design and improve instructional strategies and practices, and determine interventions to improve and enhance student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to system/school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, system and school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts for individual students and groups and subgroups of students.

Standard 5. Resource & Support Systems

STANDARD: The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that: enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The system employs and allocates staff well-qualified for their assignments. The system provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The system ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

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INDICATORS: Human Resources. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

5.1 Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes, decisions for district and school level IEP meetings

Appropriate space is provided for special need support programs

District staff can affirm that special needs students receive needed support

IEP: Individualized Education Plans

Native language usage is evident for the purpose of supporting learning

Personnel policies ensuring appropriate hiring practices

Personnel policies ensuring certification, licensure, evaluation, training

Professional learning opportunities

Program descriptions: Special Needs Populations

Schedules: District, School, Extra-Curricular; Transportation

Staff Handbooks

Staff schedules and assignments

Student Handbook

5.2 Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience):

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Personnel policies ensuring appropriate placement

Personnel policies ensuring certification, licensure, evaluation, training

Policies regarding NCLB highly qualified teachers

Professional learning opportunities

Staff can affirm that they are teaching in their major area of study

Staff Handbook

Staff schedules and assignments

Staffing of both administrative and teaching positions is appropriate and adequate

5.3 Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Budget demonstrates appropriate allocation for PD

Calendar, agenda, summaries of PD opportunities

District monitoring of professional development implementation

District staff are actively engaged in discussions that have resulted from their professional development experience

District staff can affirm their involvement in professional learning opportunities

Evaluation of PD data

Professional development plan

Staff are aware of the requirements for continuous learning

Staff implement effective strategies based on their professional development experience

5.4 Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Budget demonstrates appropriate allocation for staffing

Class size indicates appropriate and effective support of student learning

Master schedule

Personnel policies and practices

Policies regarding NCLB highly qualified teachers

INDICATORS: Financial Resources. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

5.5 Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Annual budget - current, forecasted, fund-equity

Consolidated Application (federal)

Facilities plan - current, future

Facilities protection documentation: insurance, amortization

Fiscal policies: use of all funding, including donations, reserves, discretionary

Infrastructure plans: short and long range

Practices that support appropriate use of allocated funds

Purchasing/replacement policies: adherence to EEO

School-level budgets

Space is adequate and appropriate to support student learning

State and Federal program budgets for targeted support

5.6 Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Audit reports

Fiscal protection plans: insurance

Organizational oversight of fiscal authority

Payroll and purchasing policies and processes

Practices that support appropriate use of fiscal resources

Refund policies

Secure management of all fiscal processes

INDICATORS: Physical Resources. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

5.7 Maintains sites, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

All district-wide facilities are properly maintained

Calendar of safety drills: fire, tornado, emergency crisis

Curriculum includes attention to cleanliness and safety

District staff are involved in developing and implementing safety policies

District support staff are knowledgeable about safety policies

District-wide environment is clean and safe

Facilities maintenance reports and plans

HAZMAT (hazardous materials): policies and training

Policies and processes regarding safety

Policies and processes related to student/staff injury

Policies regarding dispensing prescription medications

Stakeholder survey data supporting safety

State and Federal regulations regarding special program safety requirements

5.8 Establishes and implements written security and crisis management plans with appropriate training for stakeholders:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Crisis intervention plan

District staff and students are knowledgeable about emergency procedures

District staff are involved in the crisis intervention team

Emergency procedures

Health support staff are available

Secure record system

Student Handbook

Wellness policy

5.9 Implements processes and plans for maintaining and improving sites, facilities, and equipment:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Appropriate district staff affirm their knowledge of the plan for physical asset maintenance and replacement

Physical assets plan: short-term and long-range

Policies and procedures for maintaining and improving physical assets: site facilities, infrastructure, equipment, etc.

5.10 Provides technology infrastructure and equipment that is up-to-date and sufficient to accomplish the system's goals:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff are knowledgeable about the short and long range plans for maintenance and replacement of technology infrastructure

Policies and procedures for maintaining and improving technology infrastructure: hardware and software

Policies and procedures regarding appropriate internet access

Policies and procedures regarding the purchase of technology tools

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about policies regarding appropriate internet access

INDICATORS: Support Systems. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

5.11 Provides and coordinates support services that meet the health, counseling, nutrition, safety, co-curricular, transportation, and special learning needs of all students:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Alternative Education Program

District monitors instruction for special needs inclusion

District provides guidelines for classroom instruction that demonstrates variety of instructional methodologies to support all students

District provides guidelines for Response To Intervention program and is demonstrated at classroom level

IEP: committee, minutes, calendar, agenda, sign-in sheets

Master schedules demonstrating support for special needs

Policies and procedures that are ADA and IDEA compliant

Policies regarding use of languages other than English for district communication

Professional development calendar and topics

Special Needs Department/Committee

Staff affirm their use of instructional strategies that support special needs inclusion

Staffing of Counseling and Guidance programs

Stakeholder survey data supporting special needs programs

Stakeholders affirm their support for the district's special needs programs

Student referral policies and practices

Student referral process and procedures

Students and staff affirm their understanding of special needs populations

Teacher certification, licensure, etc. supporting special needs

Translated materials demonstrate communication to special needs population

5.12 Provides student support services coordinated with the school, home, and community:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Career Preparation Department/Committee

Community based programs

Curriculum for Career Preparation

District staff affirm that they receive regular training opportunities to support student behavior

District staff are knowledgeable in all aspects of appropriate social/emotional support for student learning behavior

Enrollment data - current status, trends

Guidance and Counseling Department/Committee

Professional development: calendar, topics

Staff assigned to career preparation programs

Stakeholders are supportive of community-based programs to support student engagement

Students are knowledgeable about career planning programs

Focus Questions:

1. What is the school system's process for recruitment, induction, placement, development, evaluation, and retention of qualified professional and support staff across the system and its schools?

When teacher opening occur, notices are posted on the LEA website, at each school site and in the central office. Notices are also shared with area colleges who may have recent graduates in the education program. LEA personnel may also communicate with other area school systems to identify possible candidates for open positions. All applicants are required to meet the state's highly qualified teacher requirements and show proof of HQ status prior to their hiring.

New teachers are provided orientation and mentoring during their first year using the state's new teacher mentoring program. All teachers are evaluated using PEPE or Educate Alabama teacher evaluation program. New teachers are evaluated annually for the first three years. After that induction period, teachers are on a three-year evaluation cycle.

All teachers complete an annual PDP (Professional Development Plan) in conjunction with their evaluator. This plan is used as a basis for helping teachers improve below average areas that were identified during their

evaluation.

When openings occur, teachers who are already employed within the LEA are considered for transfer if they express wishes to this effect.

Efforts are made to retain teachers who have demonstrated effectiveness by encouraging them to take leadership roles and by considering them for promotion when opportunities occur.

2. How does the leadership ensure that the allocation of financial resources is supportive of the school system's vision, programs, services, and its plans for continuous improvement?

The LEA uses all financial resources to support the system and schools vision and education programs. Use of federal funds including the ARRA stimulus program funds has helped the LEA meet critical needs in areas of personnel and technology. The LEA annual budget is presented during two open hearings in which stakeholders may provide input or ask questions.

The budget allocates funds to the individual schools based on state requirements. Each school receives teacher units based on enrollment and student/teacher ratio formula mandated by the state. Extra teacher units are provided through the federal programs and special education programs.

Some grant money is also used to provide additional teacher and support personnel units.

A few local teacher units are provided through the general fund to meet extremely critical areas of need.

Proposed budgets are developed cooperatively among all involved factions. LEA personnel monitors local school budgets in accordance with state department regulations.

Annual open budget hearing are held prior to the adoption of budgets to provide an opportunity for discussion and input from stakeholders.

3. How does the school system ensure, support, and monitor the provision of resource and support services that meet the needs of all students?

The LEA policy handbook, website and student handbooks containing lists and descriptions of resources and support services for students and parents.

Guidance counselors are assigned to each school. Each works with teachers to develop schedules for large group, small group and individual counseling sessions. Students are allowed to meet with counselors whenever they have a need.

Counselors work with teachers, students, parents and outside organizations to meet the needs of students as needs are identified and brought to their attentions.

Counselors disseminate student assessment information to teachers, parents and students as appropriate. Counselors meet with students after state assessments to provide information and work with them to develop a plan for improving areas in which they have demonstrated poor performance.

Counselors work with parents to keep them informed of student performance and when students are absent and facing consequences of truancy. Counselors provide parents with student reports and assessment data. They explain the reports and inform parents and students of programs and activities available to help the student improve their academic skills.

Counselors provide information to high school students about career options and they plan activities and programs to help students learn about job requirements and training. They work with students who are planning college careers and arrange for visits to colleges for those interested in learning more about them. They work with the military to provide activities to inform students of this post high school option.

Administrators monitor counselors' schedules to ensure they are working with all students. LEA personnel discuss student support services during planning meetings and in meetings with stakeholders in order to gain input and to identify areas which need improvement.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school system effectively uses human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve and exceed expectations for student learning, to meet special needs of all students, and to comply with applicable regulations. The system systematically employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments in all content areas. The system provides and fully supports ongoing, job-embedded learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. The system ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications & Relationships

STANDARD: The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Impact Statement: Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. System and school personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

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INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes, calendar of parent meetings

Calendar of events that promote stakeholder involvement

District staff affirm that stakeholders are involved in many aspects of district events, activities, decisions

Internship/partnership agreements with community-based business and agencies

Parents and community members regularly volunteer time in district

Policies regarding suggestions, grievances

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm that they are involved in many aspects of district events, activities, decisions

6.2 Uses system-wide strategies to listen to and communicate with stakeholders:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Calendars, agendas, minutes of parent meetings

District Improvement Committee: agendas, minutes, membership

Emails, phone answering system

Newsletters, brochures, letters, memos

Parent - Teacher conferences schedule

Policies regarding formal inclusion of stakeholder involvement

Stakeholders affirm they have variety of opportunities to be formally involved in life of district

Steering Committee meetings: agendas, minutes, membership

Web page dedicated to parents/community members

Wide variety of stakeholder communication documents/avenues

6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Advisory Committees

Calendar, agendas, minutes, committee membership

District staff affirm that they regularly include community in preparing instructional delivery activities

Policies regarding volunteer involvement

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm that their suggestions and recommendations are acted upon

6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Newsletters about student performance

Parent -teacher conferences: calendar, procedures, participation data

Parents and students are informed and involved in developing individualized learning plans for students

Parents and students are informed and involved in making course selections

Stakeholders affirm that they are knowledgeable about student learning

Student Handbook

6.5 Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Parent -teacher conferences: calendar, procedures, participation data

Report cards

Focus Questions:

1. How does the school system's leadership ensure that the system and its schools are responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction?

Parents and community members are invited to serve on appropriate school planning committees. They are encouraged to attend and participate in school programs and activities.

Parents and community members are asked to complete surveys and questionnaires frequently to provide input about the effectiveness of the school in meeting the needs of students, parents and the community. Data from these sources are analyzed and used in planning for school improvement.

Parent Expos are held to provide training, programs and activities for parents and to offer an opportunity for parents to discuss and provide input into the development and improvement of school programs and activities.

Parents are provided an avenue for input through the school system website which includes response buttons and e-mail options.

Parents are provided information about the school's AYP and are informed in writing through correspondence if their child's school is in school improvement status. Parents are offered the School Choice Option of transferring their child to a higher performing school if the school is declared to be in school improvement status. Parents are provided Parents Right to Know forms as required through the No Child Left Behind Law at the beginning of the school year through which they can request information about their child's teachers. Parents of children enrolled in Title I schools sign School-Parent Compacts each year which enumerate the learning goals for the child and the expectations of the parents, teachers and child in working together to reach those goals.

Parent orientation sessions are held prior to or at the beginning of the school year and parents are provided newsletters and monthly school calendars which list events and activities. Parent-teacher conference days are scheduled during the first nine-weeks grading period for parents to visit and learn about their child's progress.

2. What avenues are used to communicate information to stakeholders about the effectiveness of the school system and its schools, including the sharing of student performance results?

School staff works to keep the stakeholders informed about the school, its students and events and programs taking place. Newsletters, e-mail, school and LEA/local school websites and the local news media provide avenues for the public to receive information about the schools, programs and events.

Parents of students attending Title I schools receive notification letters of their school's progress towards making AYP if the school is declared to be in school improvement. Parents receive written "Parent Right to Know" forms at the beginning of each school year.

Parents of students in all schools receive annual school report cards, AYP reports and individual student assessment reports from all state assessments students take. Meetings are held and conferences set up to provide opportunities for school staff to explain the reports to parents, to discuss student performance levels and progress from year-to-year and to work with the parent and child in planning activities and to provide effective interventions to help the student who is low performing work toward meeting their learning goals and the state's challenging student performance standards.

When below average performance is identified by classroom teachers, parents are notified and asked to attend meetings with the teacher in which interventions are suggested and plans approved to help the student improve their weak skills areas.

Remedial/tutorial and extended learning activities and programs are provided at the school level to meet the needs of students who have demonstrated below average performance on state assessment standards.

Parents receive written notices of deficient grades, report cards are sent home each nine weeks and parents are invited to e-mail, correspond or visit the child's teachers to discuss student performance issues and plans for improvement.

Low performing students may be referred to the school's BBSST/PST (Building Based Student Support Team or Pupil Support Team) which works with parents, students and teachers to develop plans and interventions which help low performing students improve their core academic skills or to find solutions to other problems students may be having at school.

LEA at-risk funds provided through the state foundation program are used to provide preventative and intervention programs and support at the school level to work with parents and students to identify, plan and provide effective interventions to help all students reach the goal of high school graduation.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school system has the understanding, commitment, and support of all stakeholders. System and school personnel actively promote and provide regular, systematic opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among all stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts and can demonstrate a high level of meaningful participation by most stakeholder groups.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

STANDARD: The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the system with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the system and its schools demonstrate progress in improving student performance. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through analysis of student performance, system effectiveness, and assessment of the improvement process.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

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INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results):
Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Continuous Improvement Plan - district and individual schools

District staff affirm their involvement in a specific program that supports continuous improvement

District staff affirm their involvement in continuous improvement committees

Graduation and retention rates

Information/Data system

Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics

Record of student performance improvement efforts

Specific program initiatives to support continuous improvement

Stakeholder survey (satisfaction) data

State/Federal Accountability Plan

7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Calendar, agendas, minutes, sign-in sheets demonstrating stakeholder involvement in district and school improvement

District and School Improvement plan indicating membership of committees

Parent compact

Stakeholder survey data demonstrating stakeholder involvement in district and school improvement

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in continuous improvement process

7.3 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Calendar, agendas, minutes of school improvement meetings

Data: student performance, stakeholder opinion are used in development of school improvement plan

District staff affirm their understanding of the impact of programs that support student learning

District staff demonstrate capacity for providing methodologies to increase student performance

Evaluation data demonstrating impact of plan and actions taken to remediate

School improvement plans demonstrate alignment with district vision, purpose

Staff, students affirm their understanding of student performance targets

Student performance targets are communicated to all stakeholders

Vision, purpose posted in district-wide facilities

7.4 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District guidelines and professional learning provide strategies for effective instruction for closing achievement gaps

District staff affirm that they regularly use data to inform their practices

District staff affirm their involvement in evaluating the impact of instruction on student growth

District staff meetings regularly use data to inform their discussions and decisions

School improvement plans demonstrate evaluation of goals, objectives, and strategies impact on student growth

7.5 Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Continuous Improvement Plan - district and individual schools

District staff affirm their involvement in professional learning

Personnel Policies that outline staff evaluation process

Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics

7.6 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Annual Report

District staff and stakeholders affirm the use of performance data during Parent-Teacher conferences

Information/Data system

Parent-Teacher conferences

Staffing assignments support monitoring and reporting of continuous improvement efforts

Stakeholders affirm receipt of district communication regarding improvement efforts

7.7 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement :
Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions

Evaluation of effectiveness of continuous improvement plan and process

Stakeholders affirm knowledge of an evaluation of the district's improvement efforts

7.8 Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide:
Operational

Evidence Provided:

District and School Improvement Committee meetings:calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions

District staff affirm that time is allocated for improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring

Policies and procedures for engaging in district-wide and individual school improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring

7.9 Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District and School Improvement Committee meetings:calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions

District expectations and guidelines for all schools and departments to engage in a continuous improvement process

District staff affirm their knowledge of the district's expectations and guidelines for supporting student performance

Focus Questions:

1. Describe the process for continuous improvement used by the school system and its schools and the impact of this process on student learning and system effectiveness.

Schools update and revise the CIPs each year when state assessment data is received. This is done through the School Improvement committees at each school and at the district level. The CIPs are disseminated to stakeholders during meetings held for that purpose. After discussion and input is considered the final CIP is approved by the board of education and implemented at the school. LEA personnel and school administrators review the plan monthly and discuss its implementation and the monitoring of student performance.

This process impacts student learning and school effectiveness in that it helps keep the issue at the forefront of all school planning and in the instructional program. Focus on instruction is to identify specific weak skills areas of individuals and groups of students and to plan and provide instructional/remedial/tutoring programs that target improving these areas. Pre and Post tests help monitor the effectiveness of these programs during the school year

and in between administrations of the state assessments.

2. What process is used to ensure that the improvement goals reflect student learning needs and are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school system and its schools?

The CIP is developed and implemented using the vision and purpose of the school with state student assessment data comparisons as a basis. The weak areas of student performance are pinpointed and shared with teachers who use this information to plan and provide an instructional/remedial program. During the development of the CIP the school improvement committee reviews the vision and mission statements of the school and they work to integrate this into the CIP.

The school improvement committee collaborates to develop and revise CIPs. Members of the committee review the plan, analysis and discussions are held to make sure the plan is aligned with the vision and purpose of the schools. The final plan is shared with stakeholders who sign off on the plan before it is approved by the board of education and submitted to the state department of education for approval before it is implemented at the local level. The CIP is closely monitored through review and walk throughs on a monthly basis to ensure all components are being properly implemented.

3. What process is used to ensure that system and school personnel are provided professional development and technical assistance to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals?

Staff members complete professional development needs assessments and technology training needs assessments each spring. Data is analyzed and results used in planning LEA level and school level professional development activities.

All teachers complete individual PDPs (professional development plans) annually as part of their PEPE or Educate Alabama evaluation program. Part of the PDP includes identifying areas for improvement identified through the evaluation process. Information from the PDP's is used to identify topics for professional development planning.

State professional development standards and requirements are used to provide teacher training and professional development activities.

The University of North Alabama Regional Inservice Center annual professional development needs assessments are completed by LEA teachers. This information is used by the inservice center to plan and provide regional level inservice activities.

Local schools conduct formal and informal needs assessments of their teachers and plan appropriate professional development activities based on the state's professional development standards.

The LEA provides PLU professional development activities to help administrators meet the state requirements.

The schools participate in the state's ARI (Alabama Reading Initiative) Program and the AMSTI (Alabama Math, Science & Technology Initiative) Program which requires a large amount of teacher training and professional development at the regional and local levels.

4. How does the leadership ensure that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders?

The CIP is developed through efforts of the school improvement committee which includes teachers, staff members, parents, community members and students (when appropriate). Copies of the CIP are used in meetings with parents and sections are highlighted during presentations during Parent Expos, committee meetings, programs and other activities. Stakeholders are informed at the beginning of the school year that the school has available copies of the CIP and stakeholders can obtain a copy free of charge from the school contact people. The CIPs are also posted on the LEA and school websites for the public to view. Teachers review the approved CIP during faculty meetings and at grade level/subject area meetings.

LEA personnel and school administrators review the plan monthly and discuss its implementation and the monitoring of student performance. Plans are available at all stakeholder meetings and activities include reading parts of the plan in parent meetings and other programs.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school system fully implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns all functions of the system and its schools with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are systemic, sustained, and fully embedded, and the system demonstrates significant progress in improving student performance, system and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are clearly informed by the documented results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of a highly sustained, continuous process of improvement.

QA Methods

1. What processes does the district use to monitor and document improvement?

School improvement is frequently discussed at system wide and at a local school meetings held for this purpose. Results from state assessment reports, AYP Reports and other data is provided to stakeholders in a timely manner.

Data from student assessments is analyzed and tracked across time to determine is improvement is being made towards meeting the state's challenging student performance standards.

Continuous Improvement Plans are developed and implemented at the school level. LEA personnel closely monitors the implementation of CIP components through walk throughs, observations of programs and classroom instruction, meetings held with school staff and other stakeholders and monthly check lists.

Documentation is maintained and monitored at the school and LEA level of student performance.

Frequent discussions are held among stakeholders at the LEA and the school level to determine if improvement plans are making a positive impact.

Reports and data on school improvement are shared with stakeholders through meetings, e-mail, written communication, websites and through the local media.

2. How does the district provide meaningful feedback and support to its schools and across the district?

Data, reports and information related to school improvement and other issues is provided during inservice meetings of all personnel, through faculty meetings held at the local schools, discussion in small group meetings and through other forms of communication.

Charts comparing student performance across several years are generated each year and shared with stakeholders. The LEA website includes student performance charts and other related information.

Administrative meetings are held regularly in which information is disseminated and carried back to the school

staff. Discussions are held through faculty meetings, department and grade level meetings. Meetings with stakeholders are held as well as planning sessions for school improvement.

E-mail provides another effective avenue of communication for feedback and support among the schools and at the district level.

3. How does the district ensure that the AdvancED standards are met by all the schools and the district as a whole?

The LEA and school leadership and school improvement committees meet regularly to analyze data and discuss standards and current levels of performance. Information from these meetings is shared with the schools through their representation on the committees.

Standards with below average ratings have been identified and discussed among committee members and among other stakeholders and plans are being made to improve these areas.

Written reports from the SACS studies and SAR are provided for board members, committee members, teachers, parents and other stakeholders to peruse at the schools and at the central office. The final SAR will be posted on the LEA website for public use.

4. How does the district regularly collect, use, and communicate results?

Reports are collected from the local schools, committees, state department and other avenues. These reports are forwarded to appropriate individuals or groups for their perusal and use in planning and providing their school program.

Results are communicated through e-mail, hard copies are available in the central offices and at the schools, through the schools and LEA website, through hard copies sent to targeted groups, Powerpoint presentations at meetings of stakeholders and through other appropriate methods. The local media and the LEA's School Cast automated message system also provides an outlet to communicate with the public.

Conclusion

The following focus questions reflect the school's overall analysis of its internal evaluation of the accreditation standards.

Focus Questions

As you review your responses to the standards, what major trends, themes, or areas of focus emerge that cut across the seven standards?

All of the standards had a rating of 3 or 4 which indicated an operational or highly functional level for each of the standards.

Another strength of the LEA is the use of more than \$1 million per year in grants from outside sources which fund the TRACKS after school and summer program, summer remedial/enrichment programs, credit recovery program, drug and alcohol resistance program, JAG (Jobs for Alabama Graduations), community education programs for adults and provides funds for additional instructional and support personnel and for technology, software, materials and equipment to supplement and support the instructional program.

Local unemployment rates remain high and have impacted student enrollment in some schools as families move out of the area in search of employment. We recognize the fact that our schools need to work hard to develop programs and activities which will attract additional students. We need to work with the local business community to improve employment opportunities in the area to attract and keep workers.

There seems to be a high level of collaboration and support among the schools and all schools are working together towards our common vision and mission which is a positive factor for the school system.

We have identified Teaching and Learning as an area of strength. Our instructional staff is doing a good job as evidenced from our student performance levels on state assessments.

Community and stakeholder support is at operational levels. We have identified this area as in need of some improvement. Efforts are being made at the local schools to work closer with community members and parents in collaborative efforts to improve student performance and to strengthen the relationship between parents and the schools.

Proration, mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act and other federal and state regulations including highly qualified teachers and AYP requirements have placed a strain on our budgets. This has severely limited efforts for improvement and expansion of programs and services for students. The system has been forced to decrease personnel in some schools, to make cutbacks in some instructional programs, to limit the course offerings in some subject areas which has led to larger class sizes in some schools.

Although the LEA and schools are suffering financial loss through three years of proration in state funding, the impact of this has been lessened through the receipt of grant funds from several sources, the use of ARRA stimulus funds to retain personnel, through the receipt of 16th section lawsuit interest income and through the support of funds provided through a temporary one cent sales tax for education which has generated extra

income for education.

Another area which we identified and are working on improving is to upgrade technology connectivity infrastructure and to provide technology for use in the classrooms. We have also provided training for our teachers on the effective use of technology in the instructional program.

Through the self-assessment process we have identified specific skills areas that students are performing below average in and schools have, through their continuous improvement plan development and implementation, addressed those shortfalls in student performance.

Continuous Improvement Plans are developed based on the LEA and school's vision and mission and on student performance data to improve areas in which below average performance were demonstrated. Schools are providing additional remedial classes, making changes in the instructional programs and extending learning opportunities to help students improve specific identified below average performance areas.

We have also identified the need for additional classrooms and other facilities at some of our schools which would allow us to better meet student need and would expand our capacity for student enrollment in some areas.

Based on your review of these cross-cutting themes/trends and each of the seven standards, what would you consider to be your school system's greatest strengths?

One strength of the LEA is the use of more than \$1 million per year in grants obtained from outside sources which fund the TRACKS after school and summer program, summer remedial/enrichment programs, credit recovery program, drug and alcohol resistance program, JAG (Jobs for Alabama Graduations), community education programs for adults and provides funds for additional instructional and support personnel and for materials and equipment to supplement and support the instructional program.

We have identified Teaching and Learning as an area of strength. Our instructional staff is doing a good job as evidenced from our student performance levels on state assessments. Areas of weakness are identified and effective interventions provided in a timely manner to improve weak areas.

Although the LEA and schools are suffering financial loss through three years of proration in state funding, the impact of this has been lessened through the receipt of grant funds from several sources, the use of ARRA stimulus funds to retain personnel, through the receipt of 16th section lawsuit interest income and through the support of funds provided through a temporary one cent sales tax for education which has generated extra income for education.

There seems to be a high level of collaboration and support among the schools and all schools are working together towards our common vision and mission which is a positive factor for the school system. When a school discovers a program that proves to be highly effective in improving student performance information is shared with other schools. When a problem arises, everyone works together to find an effective solution.

Continuous Improvement Plans are developed based on the LEA and school's vision and mission and on student performance data to improve areas in which below average performance were demonstrated. Schools are providing additional remedial classes, making changes in the instructional programs and extending learning opportunities to help students improve specific identified below average performance areas.

97 % of our core academic teachers meet the state's highly qualified teacher standards.

Despite budget cuts due to proration, the LEA and schools are able to provide extended learning opportunities

for students through the TRACKS after school and summer programs, summer enrichment/remedial programs, credit recovery program, JAG (Jobs for Alabama's Graduates) program, dual enrollment high school/college program and the LEA's local distance learning programs.

What would you consider to be your school system's greatest challenges?

We need additional funding in order to meet needs in some areas. Funding is need to expand facilities at some school sites. We need additional personnel to meet student need at some schools to provide additional course offerings for students in grades 7 - 12, to lower pupil-teacher ratio in some critical needs areas and to expand remedial classes for low performing students.

We need to develop and implement effective programs and activities for at-risk high school students to help prevent dropouts.

We need to continue to closely track and analyze student performance on state assessments and to identify specific skills areas in which students are demonstrating below average performance. We need to develop and implement effective programs to help these students make progress towards meeting the state's challenging student performance standards.

Although much progress has been made over the past five years, and due to the rapid advancement in this area, we need to continue to seek funding to improve our technology connectivity and infrastructure and to update instructional technology and in communications technology.

The local schools need to continue to seek ways to work closer with community members and parents in collaborative efforts to improve student performance and to strengthen the relationship between parents and the schools.

How will you use the insights gained from this self-assessment to inform and enhance your quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts?

Information and feedback from this study are already being shared with personnel, students, parents and community members. Reports of the results of the study and from the SACS committee report will be disseminated through several communication avenues.

Results and insights will be used in planning for future improvements at the LEA and at the school levels by using the information from identifying weaknesses to strengthen the instructional and student support programs. Schools are already working on developing and implementing programs and interventions to improve student performance in identified weak skills areas.

Contiuous improvement plans are being implemented and closely monitored in an effort to make sure the instructional program is effective and to identify areas for improvement.

The LEA will continue to identify and seek funding sources for programs, activities and materials that would enhance and support the instructional program.

The LEA and schools will regularly review the SACS reports and the standards and we will analyze progress towards meeting the goals for improvement that are identified. Plans will be developed and implemented to help us meet and maintain all standards.

We will continue to closely track student performance data and use this information to operate, change, develop and implement programs and activities that are proven to be effective in improving student performance on state assessments.

Standards Assessment Report Summary

Standards & Indicators	Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
1. Vision & Purpose				
1.1 Establishes a vision and purpose for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders				✓
1.2 Communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support				✓
1.3 Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision				✓
1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community			✓	
1.5 Ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services				✓
1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate				✓
2. Governance & Leadership				
2.1 Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system				✓
2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system				✓
2.3 Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations				✓
2.4 Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board				✓
2.5 Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources				✓
2.6 Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations				✓
2.7 Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations				✓
2.8 Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness				✓
2.9 Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs			✓	
2.10 Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals				✓
2.11 Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership				✓
2.12 Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction				✓
2.13 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel				✓
3. Teaching & Learning				
3.1 Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly- defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills				✓
3.2 Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning				✓
3.3 Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels				✓
3.4 Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice				✓
3.5 Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity				✓
3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning				✓
3.7 Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment				✓
3.8 Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning				✓
3.9 Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning			✓	
3.10 Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals			✓	
3.11 Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction				✓
4. Documenting & Using Results				
4.1 Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and bias free				✓
4.2 Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of				

teaching and learning				✓
4.3 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance				✓
4.4 Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders				✓
4.5 Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness			✓	
4.6 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence				✓
4.7 Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations				✓
5. Resource & Support Systems				
5.1 Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities				✓
5.2 Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)				✓
5.3 Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff				✓
5.4 Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable				✓
5.5 Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement				✓
5.6 Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures				✓
5.7 Maintains sites, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment				✓
5.8 Establishes and implements written security and crisis management plans with appropriate training for stakeholders				✓
5.9 Implements processes and plans for maintaining and improving sites, facilities, and equipment				✓
5.10 Provides technology infrastructure and equipment that is up-to-date and sufficient to accomplish the system's goals				✓
5.11 Provides and coordinates support services that meet the health, counseling, nutrition, safety, co-curricular, transportation, and special learning needs of all students				✓
5.12 Provides student support services coordinated with the school, home, and community				✓
6. Stakeholder Communications & Relationships				
6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning				✓
6.2 Uses system-wide strategies to listen to and communicate with stakeholders				✓
6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system				✓
6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders				✓
6.5 Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders				✓
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement				
7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results)				✓
7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement			✓	
7.3 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning				✓
7.4 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels				✓
7.5 Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals				✓
7.6 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders			✓	
7.7 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement				✓
7.8 Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide			✓	
7.9 Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts				✓