# AdvancED® Engagement Review Report

**Geneva City Board of Education**
**November 12 – 15, 2017**

## AdvancED® Performance Accreditation

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# Introduction

## AdvancED Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

Accreditation is pivotal to leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research based standards, the accreditation process examines the whole institution—the program, the cultural context and the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of learners. Through the AdvancED Accreditation Process, highly skilled and trained Engagement Review Teams gather first-hand evidence and information pertinent to evaluating an institution's performance against the research-based AdvancED Performance Standards. Using these Standards, Engagement Review Teams assess the quality of learning environments to gain valuable insights and target improvements in teaching and learning. AdvancED provides Standards that are tailored for all education providers so that the benefits of accreditation are universal across the education community.

Through a comprehensive review of evidence and information, our experts gain a broad understanding of institution quality. Using the Standards, the review team provides valuable feedback to institutions that helps to focus and guide each institution's improvement journey. Valuable evidence and information from other stakeholders, including students, also is obtained through interviews, surveys and additional activities.

As a part of the Engagement Review, stakeholders were interviewed by members of the Engagement Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's learning environment and organizational effectiveness. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the Engagement Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder groups.

| Stakeholder Groups | Number |
|---|---|
| **System Leadership** | 14 |
| **Teachers** | 21 |
| **Support Staff** | 7 |
| **Parents and Community Leaders** | 17 |
| **Students** | 18 |
| **School Board** | 5 |
| | |
| **Total** | **82** |

Once all of the information is compiled and reviewed, the team develops the Engagement Review Report and presents preliminary results to the institution. Results from the Engagement Review are reported in four ratings represented by colors. These ratings provide guidance and insight into an institution's continuous improvement efforts as described below:

| Color | Rating | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Red** | Needs Improvement | Identifies key areas that need more focused improvement efforts |
| **Yellow** | Emerging | Represents areas to enhance and extend current improvement efforts |
| **Green** | Meets Expectations | Pinpoints quality practices that meet the Standards |

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| Color | Rating | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Blue** | Exceeds Expectations | Demonstrates noteworthy practices producing clear results that exceed expectations |

## AdvancED Continuous Improvement System

The AdvancED Continuous Improvement System (CIS) provides a systemic fully integrated solution to help institutions map out and navigate a successful improvement journey. In the same manner that educators are expected to understand the unique needs of every learner and tailor the education experience to drive student success, every institution must be empowered to map out and embrace their unique improvement journey. AdvancED expects institutions to use the results and the analysis of data from various interwoven components for the implementation of improvement actions to drive education quality and improved student outcomes. While each improvement journey is unique, the journey is driven by key actions. AdvancED identifies three important components of a continuous improvement process and provides feedback on the components of the journey using a rubric that identifies the three areas to guide the improvement journey. The areas are as follows:

| Commitment to Continuous Improvement | Rating |
|---|---|
| The institution has collected sufficient and quality data to identify school improvement needs. | Emerging |
| Implications from the analysis of data have been identified and used for the development of key strategic goals. | Emerging |
| The institution demonstrates the capacity to implement their continuous improvement journey. | Meets Expectations |

## Continuous Improvement Journey Narrative

Geneva City School System presented quality evidence at the system and the school levels. Evidence provided included Continuous Improvement Plans, eProve survey results, assessment data, as well as policy and procedure manuals. Most areas for improvement identified by the Team were also previously identified by the superintendent indicating that the system leadership is being guided and is guiding the system in their Continuous Improvement Journey.

The Team determined that the system has intentionally begun its improvement journey and has improved or has plans to improve classroom practices affecting learning, many of which were identified through the eleot® observation data. The system leadership is willing and has demonstrated capability of not only allocating resources but making informed decisions and developing appropriate courses of action in which to proceed in order to improve achievement for learners. Key factors in the continuous improvement journey of Geneva City Schools are the use of data to guide instructional and learning practices in the classroom and implementation of a curriculum that is aligned with system expectations for achievement and preparation of all students for the next level of learning.

# AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results

The AdvancED Performance Standards Diagnostic is used by the Engagement Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on AdvancED's Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of the three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity** and **Resource Capacity**. Point values are established within the diagnostic and a percentage of the points earned by the institution for each Standard is calculated from the point values for each Standard. Results are reported within four ranges identified by the colors representing Needs Improvement (Red), Emerging (Yellow), Meets Expectations

(Green), and Exceeds Expectations (Blue). The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

## Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress toward its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to implement strategies that improve learner and educator performance.

| Leadership Capacity Standards | | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| **1.1** | The system commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners. | Meets Expectations |
| **1.2** | Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the system's purpose and desired outcomes for learners. | Meets Expectations |
| **1.3** | The system engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice. | Emerging |
| **1.4** | The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support system effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |
| **1.5** | The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities. | Meets Expectations |
| **1.6** | Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |
| **1.7** | Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning. | Meets Expectations |
| **1.8** | Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the system's purpose and direction. | Exceeds Expectations |
| **1.9** | The system provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |
| **1.10** | Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement. | Meets Expectations |
| **1.11** | Leaders implement a quality assurance process for its institutions to ensure system effectiveness and consistency. | Emerging |

## Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning is the primary expectation of every system and its institutions. The establishment of a learning culture built on high expectations for learning, along with quality programs and services, which include an analysis of results, are all key indicators of the system's impact on teaching and learning.

| Learning Capacity Standards | | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| **2.1** | Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the system. | Meets Expectations |
| **2.2** | The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving. | Emerging |
| **2.3** | The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs and skills needed for success. | Exceeds Expectations |

| Learning Capacity Standards | | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| **2.4** | The system has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers that support their educational experiences. | Meets Expectations |
| **2.5** | Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels. | Emerging |
| **2.6** | The system implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices. | Emerging |
| **2.7** | Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the system's learning expectations. | Meets Expectations |
| **2.8** | The system provides programs and services for learners' educational future and career planning. | Meets Expectations |
| **2.9** | The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners. | Meets Expectations |
| **2.10** | Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated. | Meets Expectations |
| **2.11** | Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning. | Emerging |
| **2.12** | The system implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning. | Meets Expectations |

## Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources align and support the needs of the system and institutions served. Systems ensure that resources are aligned with its stated purpose and direction and distributed equitably so that the needs of the system are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The system examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, and system effectiveness.

| Resource Capacity Standards | | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| **3.1** | The system plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the system's effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |
| **3.2** | The system's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness. | Emerging |
| **3.3** | The system provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |
| **3.4** | The system attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the system's purpose and direction. | Meets Expectations |
| **3.5** | The system integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness. | Exceeds Expectations |
| **3.6** | The system provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the system. | Meets Expectations |
| **3.7** | The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the system's purpose and direction. | Exceeds Expectations |
| **3.8** | The system allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the system's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. | Exceeds Expectations |

# Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) Results

The eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) is a learner-centric classroom observation tool that comprises 28 items organized in seven environments aligned with the AdvancED Standards.- The eleot provides useful, relevant, structured, and quantifiable data on the extent to which students are engaged in activities and/or demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and/or dispositions that are conducive to effective learning. Classroom observations are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes. Results from eleot are reported on a scale of one to four based on the degree and quality of the engagement.

| **eleot® Observations** | |
|---|---|
| **Total Number of** eleot® Observations | **36** |
| **Environments** | **Rating** |
| **Equitable Learning Environment** | 2.79 |
| Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs | 2.28 |
| Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support | 3.36 |
| Learners are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner | 3.56 |
| Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions | 1.97 |
| **High Expectations Environment** | 2.81 |
| Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher | 2.75 |
| Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable | 3.06 |
| Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work | 2.67 |
| Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing) | 2.86 |
| Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning | 2.72 |
| **Supportive Learning Environment** | 3.23 |
| Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful | 3.22 |
| Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback) | 3.03 |
| Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks | 3.25 |
| Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher | 3.43 |
| **Active Learning Environment** | 2.92 |
| Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and the teacher predominate | 3.14 |
| Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences | 2.53 |
| Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities | 3.14 |
| Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments | 2.86 |
| **Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment** | 2.65 |
| Learners monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored | 2.56 |
| Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work | 2.92 |
| Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content | 2.83 |
| Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed | 2.28 |

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| eleot® Observations | |
|---|---|
| **Total Number of** eleot® Observations | **36** |
| **Environments** | **Rating** |
| **Well-Managed Learning Environment** | 3.32 |
| Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other | 3.58 |
| Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others | 3.53 |
| Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another | 3.00 |
| Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions | 3.17 |
| **Digital Learning Environment** | 1.81 |
| Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning | 1.78 |
| Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning | 1.86 |
| Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and/or work collaboratively for learning | 1.78 |

## eleot® Narrative

The eleot® observations resulted in a system picture of thoughtful deliberate instruction delivered to students for acquisition of knowledge and skills. Students were often involved in teacher-led class discussions and strived to meet the expectations of the teachers, responding to the teachers and their peers in a positive, respectful manner. Student engagement most often involved individual written or oral responses to questions or tasks that were presented to them. A number of instances of hands-on learning and some higher-order thinking activities as well as small group work were noted but these could have been higher among the classes observed.

The integration of technology into learning tasks was not consistent across the classrooms observed. While most classrooms utilized SmartBoards and other digital earning devices, some classes made no use of technology at all. Engagement Review Team members identified a number of lessons that could have been technology supported and noted the system is ready to move forward quickly into deeper technology-integrated teaching and learning, finding that this will happen with the proper training and specific expectations for technology use in classrooms and integration into learning.

Classroom management was commendable in the great percentage of the classes since system-wide expectations for behavior are evident and teachers are proactive, utilizing their experience and relationships with the students to keep them engaged. This circumvented potentially disruptive situations. The review Team noted how the expectations for appropriate and on-task behaviors were consistently exhibited in classrooms of all grade levels, also noting the multitude of opportunities to enhance learning environments through careful analysis of eleot® data, thus supporting the strengthening of expectations for professional practice in the classrooms.

The Supportive Learning Environment was scored at 3.23.

The Team found students to be very positive about the learning experiences in their classrooms. Classrooms exhibited high rates of on-task behaviors and engagement even in those where instruction was more traditional, indicative of the culture the team found to be prevalent across the system.

The Well-Managed Learning Environment scored 3.32.

Speaking and interacting respectfully with teachers and peers scored high along with following classroom rules and working well with others. These scores are strong because of the expectations and culture that are consistently maintained throughout the schools of the system. Within this domain are also indicators on classroom transitions

that are smoothly and efficiently executed which scored lower. Simply stated, fewer classroom transitions were observed because learning activities tend toward large group and teacher-centered.

The Active Learning Environment scored 2.92.

The stronger indicators on active engagement in discussions and activities are evident in this environment. The team noted the free-flow of comfortable conversations among students as well as between students and teachers that supported content and helped to accomplish tasks.

The Equitable Learning Environment scored 2.79.

This score confirms that students have equal access to classroom instruction and activities. The score supports the commendable behavior, on-task behaviors and engagement levels the review team observed in classrooms. A strength in this environment is the equal access to activities, instruction and support enjoyed by students. A low indicator for this environment concerns opportunities for students to learn about other students in the classrooms, their cultures and differences.

The High Expectations Environment scored 2.81.

The Team observed that students know and strive to meet the expectations established by the teacher and are tasked with activities and learning that are attainable. Students clearly understood that their teachers expect to them to engage in the learning activities.

A number of engaging discussions were witnessed that challenged student knowledge and thinking. Learning tasks and responding to questioning that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing) are areas for improvement as well as engaging in challenging but attainable learning activities.

Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment scored 2.65.

Students demonstrated their understanding of the content being presented through completion of the work expected and through participation in classroom activities. The Team noted few indications that students understand how their work is assessed. This finding relates to the teacher-centered model of instruction, the provision of examples of the product expected from students, and teachers individualizing instruction and checking for understanding of that instruction.

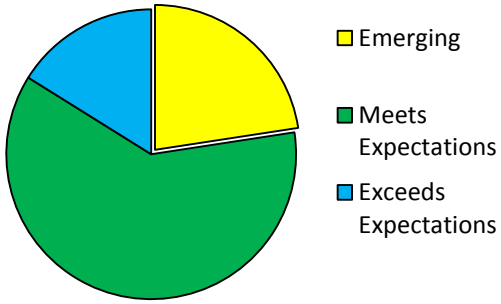
The Digital Learning Environment scored 1.81.

This score reflects those across accredited institutions appearing low because educators everywhere are struggling to learn what their students can do instinctively- utilize digital tools/technology in learning processes. The 1.78 system score indicates a need for focused efforts to carefully match technology goals and plans of the system to the classroom standards, strategies and techniques that are implemented in the classrooms.

The review Team found a large number of instances in which technology was being used though mainly in large group, display fashion, to communicate and work collaboratively for learning. The Team was well aware that not every lesson should be a technology-based or supported lesson. Room for growth is apparent in using digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, to create original works for learning, support differentiation and higher order learning tasks, and to facilitate collaboration and communication to provide highly productive, challenging learning situations. The Team notes here their finding that technology integration across the Geneva system is higher than many institutions in the AdvancED network.

# Findings

The chart below provides an overview of the institution ratings across the three Domains.




| Rating | Number of Standards |
|---|---|
| Needs Improvement | 0 |
| Emerging | 7 |
| Meets Expectations | 19 |
| Exceeds Expectations | 5 |

## Powerful Practices

Powerful Practices reflect noteworthy observations and actions that have yielded clear results in student achievement or organizational effectiveness and are actions that exceed what is typically observed or expected in an institution.

**Powerful Practice #1**

A long history of stakeholder support and engagement contributes to the positive culture that permeates every aspect of system and school operations. The superintendent's commitment to cultivate leadership effectiveness directly impacts the growth and success of the system.

**Primary Standard:**

Standard 1.9 The system provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness. (Standard 1.8)

**Evidence:**

Interviews and observations by the team and survey responses overwhelmingly confirmed the high level of stakeholder support for the system. Leadership staff stated that the "best and most important aspects of the system are the positive culture and our commitment to the whole child." Comments from parents included, "the teacher knows the kids' names and stays involved with them throughout their education." Another parent stated, ". . . teachers are not here for the income – they are interested in the outcome which is to see my child be successful." Finally, "I am very proud of the education my child is receiving." Multiple staff echoed the teacher who stated, "This is a wonderful place – it's family." Students stated, "The teachers are good and they love every single student." All students interviewed indicated they felt safe at school. The Team noted how the superintendent is committed to cultivating leadership effectiveness which will, in turn, transform instructional practices and increase student achievement throughout the system.

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**Powerful Practice #2**

The Geneva City School System demonstrates strategic long-range budget planning, efficient allocation of resources and visionary planning for career and technical workforce needs.

**Primary Standard:**

Standard 3.7 The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the system's purpose and direction.
(Standard 3.8, 3.4)

**Evidence:**

Over the past few years, decisions and actions by the governing board of the Geneva City Schools have resulted in a 2.35 month reserve in system funds. The system has used budget reserves for the purchase of technology resources for the system. Technology upgrades at the schools and curriculum purchases for specific classes support programs which are research-based and depict best practices are introduced into classrooms. Stakeholder interviews, observations and evidence documentation indicate that human, material and fiscal resources have been efficiently allocated throughout the system to meet the learners' and system's identified needs and priorities. The system has in place a process for requesting resources, determining the distribution of resources and aligning the resources with the system's purpose and direction.

In the past twenty years, the city of Geneva, AL, has experienced the loss of approximately 3,600 jobs at various plants and businesses in the community. The loss of these jobs has led to families leaving the area which impact student enrollment. Recognizing the need for a more trained workforce, a partnership was formed among the Geneva City Schools, Geneva County Schools, Lurleen B. Wallace Community College, Wallace State Community College, Enterprise Community College, the Alabama Department of Education and the Alabama Army National Guard. The National Guard owns an armory in Geneva which is now being leased to the school systems. The armory has been renovated so that classes in aviation maintenance, automotive technology, welding, health services and education can be taught in the facility during the week. On "guard weekends," the facility is used for military training and exercises. Geneva Regional Technical Center accepts students from both Geneva City and Geneva County schools. Presently, ninety-two students are enrolled in the offered programs. With support from local legislators, local educational institutions and the military, students have new opportunities to become trade certified before high school graduation. The trained workforce will be prepared for jobs in nearby military facilities, the steel fabrication plant in Geneva and the local hospital. The vision is that the programs will expand and more students will have the opportunity for success at the next level.

## Improvement Priorities

Improvement priorities are developed to enhance the capacity of the institution to reach a higher level of performance and reflect the areas identified by the Engagement Review Team to have the greatest impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

**Improvement Priority #1**

Evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum to: ensure that the system is implementing a curriculum that is based on high expectations and preparation of learners for their next levels; determine appropriate strategies to improve student performance; and ensure that strategies are driven by the analysis and use of data to increase student achievement.

**Primary Standard:**

Standard 2.6 The system implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices. (Standards 2.5)

**Evidence:**

Interviews, evidence and eleot® observations conducted in the three schools of the system identified the need for a formal, system-wide evaluation of the curriculum and instruction. The Team found individualized instruction at the elementary levels was evident in the great number of classrooms but was not as prevalent in the upper grade levels. Some pockets of staged intervention strategies such as Edgenuity, Compass learning, small and whole group instruction, bell ringers and bell- to-bell instruction were observed that addressed the needs of individual students. The administration, interpretation, and analysis of data were evident during some classroom observations and through interviews with teachers, counselors, and central office staff though inconsistent across the system. Usage reports, comparison and trend data, grade reports and various charts revealed that data is being collected but is not systemically utilized to guide instruction and increase student achievement.

Intervention and instructional coaches are provided at the elementary level but not at the middle and high schools. The Team noted that such staff aids the refinement of teachers' pedagogical skills through the collaborative and ongoing professional development and striving for improvement at the school level. Teachers demonstrated various methods of engagement as a means of driving improvement efforts but the Team noted a lack of strategies that support high expectations. Documentation and interviews revealed that one school utilized the enrichment period to track interventions to help students achieve personal yearly goals, and demonstrate improved student performance. This level of intervention was not evident across the system.

**Improvement Priority #2**

Formulate and implement a data utilization plan that will include such guidance as:

- identification of the specific data to be reviewed;
- a timeline with specific steps and goals;
- a schedule for the systematic review and analysis of the data;
- clear expectations for what teachers will learn from the data;
- clear expectations for how teachers will use the data;
- and an evaluative piece to monitor demonstrable effects of this process on student achievement.

**Primary Standard:**

Standard 2.11 Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.
(Standard 1.3)

**Evidence:**

The Team noted disparity across the system in the awareness and utilization of data to guide instruction and instructional practices. Interviews, evidence and eleot® observations revealed inconsistency in collecting and interpreting data from arrange of sources as well as a lack of training on the analysis and use of data to increase student achievement. Follow-up after professional development that would support high expectations for student performance was also found to be needed. Other than the standard annual assessment, the team found little information related to types of data used, how it was used, or procedures or documentation of a plan to assess data.

The Team discussed how the adoption of a comprehensive assessment program, using multiple data points to track student performance and identify trends, would enhance the use of student centered diagnostic information to promote data driven decision-making at the school and system levels. Classroom level observations and interviews of teachers, students, and parents were helpful in allowing the Team to see some evidence of data being used at some levels but still highlighted possible lack of use at other schools. Elementary teachers made some references to expectations that they use data to guide instruction. However, the use of data to inform instruction was not found to be a systemic process. When asked, directly, teachers indicated that this was an area in which they wished they knew more so they could improve and help students. Little evidence was found of monthly agendas or plans of how the faculty will approach the interpretation, assessment, and study of data in order to help determine the specific needs of not only the students but the instructional practices.

In interviews with leadership and stakeholders**,** there were some references to sources of data used, but this was only quarterly and annually depending on the source. The Team noted a lack of structure in data collection and analysis to guide the achievement of the curriculum. Ultimately, the Team found that the lack of consistent use of data sources to promote analysis of the academic program and improvements in instructional practices was an immediate need for the system to support improved student performance.

# Accreditation Recommendation and Index of Educational Quality™ (IEQ™)

The Engagement Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the institution earns the distinction of accreditation for a five-year term. AdvancED will review the results of the Engagement Review to make a final determination, including the appropriate next steps for the institution in response to these findings.

AdvancED provides the Index of Education Quality™ (IEQ™) as a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus. The IEQ is comprised of the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: 1) Leadership Capacity; 2) Learning Capacity; and 3) Resource Capacity and the results of eleot classroom observations. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provides information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria.

| Institution IEQ | 326.04 |
|---|---|

# Conclusion Narrative

The following significant themes were identified as worthy of emphasis concerning student performance and systemic operations supporting improved student performance.

**Culture**

The positive culture and nurturing community environment supports learning and provides a strong foundation for growth. The system boasts a 95% graduation rate that the Team found to be a result of the strong support of students and the system by all stakeholders. The community expectations for student behavior and success are a significant driver in the graduation rate.

**Continuous Improvement**

The system has intentionally begun its improvement journey and has plans to improve classroom practices and system processes affecting learning. Key factors in the continuous improvement journey of Geneva City schools are the use of data to guide instructional and learning practices the classroom, and implementation of a curriculum that is aligned with system expectations achievement and preparation of all students for the next level of learning. A standards-based curriculum that is regularly reviewed and revised will provide the structure and support of high expectations, differentiation, and high student achievement that will continue to improve.

**System Resources**

The system leadership has demonstrated capability of not only allocating resources but making informed decisions and developing appropriate courses of action in which to proceed in order to improve student achievement. Long range planning and budget priorities indicate the system commitment to continuous improvement and contribute to student learning.

**The Use of Data**

Frequent and systematic data analysis will support the monitoring of student performance, timely intervention, and adjustment of curriculum and teacher practice to support higher student achievement.

**In the Classrooms**

A positive, cohesive culture existed in classrooms across the system and the supportive relationship between learners and teachers was evident. Learners participated in class without fear of negative feedback, and they received support from the teacher and their peers to understand concepts or complete activities. Well-managed learning environments were noted in almost all observations. Learners interacted respectfully with teachers and worked well with others. Learners demonstrated knowledge and understanding of classroom rules and followed them, indicative not only of classroom rules and expectations but of the expectations of the community. While students are well-supported and classroom environments are strongly conducive to learning, the promotion of creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving could be enhanced.

**Technology in the Classrooms**

The integration of technology into learning tasks was not consistent across the classrooms observed. While most classrooms utilized SmartBoards and other digital earning devices, some classes made no use of technology at all. Technology integration should be driven by differentiated instruction, application of knowledge, higher order thinking skills, increased student collaboration and engagement, and should be tightly aligned with the guiding statements of the system.

**Quality Assurance Processes**

Systemic quality assurance processes that ensure system effectiveness and consistency were notable but the team found that these could be further developed as the system grows in its continuous improvement processes: i.e., the ripple effect of improvement in one area requires corresponding assessment evaluation and improvement in others. The system would benefit from a systemic alignment and improvement process, a process that can be under-valued by smaller school systems.

**Professional Learning Structures**

While the Team found evidences of commendable collaboration in and among all professionals in the system to support the assessment and improvement of factors and practices supporting student achievement, very few formal collaboration structures that include in their agenda: dates, notes and goals of the meeting; how data is brought analyzed and shared on a consistent basis, and; results that are reported to and monitored by leadership to guide and ensure effectiveness supporting increased student performance.

**Conclusion**

The Geneva City Schools Engagement Review Team agrees that the system is poised to achieve substantial growth along their journey “to educate every student and produce graduates prepared for success.” The guidance provided by the Engagement Review Team- Improvement Priority 5.4 on the use of data to support the continuous improvement process, and Improvement Priority 3.3 on the alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment which is supported by the more focused use of data described in Improvement Priority 5.4- will shine the spotlight on system processes and improvements that will support increased performance by students. Powerful Practice 2.4 on the culture established by focus on the system mission and beliefs and strengthened by practices of the system leadership, highlights the abilities of the system to achieve the Improvement Priorities, guided by highly effective leadership.

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# Next Steps

The results of the Engagement Review provide the next step to guide the improvement journey of the institution in their efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Accreditation Engagement Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on their current improvement efforts and to adapt and adjust their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

Upon receiving the Accreditation Engagement Review Report the institution is encouraged to implement the following steps:

- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Develop plans to address the Improvement Priorities identified by the Engagement Review Team.
- Use the findings and data from the report to guide and strengthen the institution's continuous improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report
- Continue your Improvement Journey

# Team Roster

The Engagement Review Teams are comprised of professionals with varied backgrounds and professional experiences. All Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members complete AdvancED training and eleot® certification to provide knowledge and understanding of the AdvancED tools and processes. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

| Team Member Name | Brief Biography |
|---|---|
| J. Drew Moore, Lead Evaluator | Drew Moore began his teaching career as an elementary music teacher in Shreveport, Louisiana. Professional experiences include public school education, media director at a residential high school for the gifted in math, science, and performing arts; instructor for the local university and university laboratory school administrator. Retired after thirty-three years in public and higher education, he now chairs and serves as Team Member on Engagement Review Teams at the school, district, distance learning, and corporate levels. Drew also serves on the Louisiana State AdvancED/SACS committee and the AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Degrees include: Bachelor of Music Education, Master's in Music, Specialist Degree in Public School Administration and Doctorate in Education Technologies from Northwestern State University in Louisiana and additional graduate work at Memphis State University in Tennessee and Louisiana State University- Shreveport. |
| Celeste Tilley | Celeste Tilley has spent approximately 30 years in public education. She served as a high school business teacher for 18 years and in various district-level positions for the past 12 years, including high school curriculum supervisor, curriculum director, human resources director, and currently federal programs director for Elmore County Public Schools in Wetumpka, Alabama. She has served on several accreditation review teams in Alabama and Georgia. Celeste holds a Bachelor's degree and Master's degree in Business Education from the University of Alabama, and she is a certified K-12 public school administrator in Alabama. |

| Team Member Name | Brief Biography |
|---|---|
| Donna Wear | Donna Wear is the Principal of the Commonwealth Middle College for McCracken and Marshall County Public Schools in Paducah, KY. The Middle College, located on the campus of West Kentucky Community & Technical College, provides for students the opportunity to earn an average of 42 college hours before high school graduation. Ms. Wear holds a BS and MA in education from Murray State University, Murray, KY. She also has Rank I superintendent, supervisor of instruction and principal credentials from MSU. Ms. Wear has experience as a secondary English and Social Studies teacher and secondary school principal and assistant principal. She has served as an AdvancEd KY Field Ambassador for several years. She has been Lead Evaluator for many school Engagement Reviews and served on several Engagement Review teams. |
| Dr. Tracy Smitherman, Associate Lead Evaluator | Dr. Tracy Smitherman has been employed with the Alabama Department of Youth Services School District since 1997 in various capacities. Currently, she holds the title of Curriculum & Federal Programs Coordinator. Dr. Smitherman received her Doctorate and Educational Specialist degrees in Educational Leadership, Policy and Law from Alabama State University, Montgomery, Alabama. She received her Master in Administration and Supervision from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana and a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Environmental Science from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Dr. Smitherman has served as Acting Superintendent, Educational Director, Educational Coordinator, Principal and Teacher. She is presently on and serves as officer on various Advisory and Research Committees statewide. She has led and served on numerous AdvancED Engagement Reviews as both a team leader and member. |
| Tony Willis | Tony Willis currently serves as the instructional Leader (Principal) at L.E. Wilson Elementary in Sheffield, Alabama as part of the Sheffield City School System. He obtained my B.S. degree from the University of North Alabama and advanced degrees from the University of Alabama. He has taught and served as an administrator for over 20 years now. He has served as an administrator in a private school, a rural county school as well as an urban school. It has provided him with a varied background and experiences. |

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Toll Free: 888.41EDNOW (888.413.3669)  Global: +1 678.392.2285, ext. 6963

9115 Westside Parkway, Alpharetta, GA  30009

## About AdvancED

AdvancED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization serving the largest community of education professionals in the world. Founded on more than 100 years of work in continuous improvement, AdvancED combines the knowledge and expertise of a research institute, the skills of a management consulting firm and the passion of a grassroots movement for educational change to empower Pre-K-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.

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