



Accreditation Report

Houston County Schools

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Executive Summary

Introduction

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

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

Description of the School System

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

The Houston County School District serves close to 28,000 students on 38 campuses. The current enrollment is 27,938 students, an increase of 328 over the 2012-2013 enrollment of 27,610. In 2011-2012, a total of 27,435 students were enrolled, which is a three-year increase of 503 students. Our growth rate slowed due to the economy, but has begun to increase. For comparison, over the 10-year period of 2002 to 2012, enrollment increased 16 percent with a total gain of 4,911 students, an average of 491 per year. From 2009 to 2012, enrollment grew 3.75 percent, an average of 274 students per year for a total of 823 students.

In 2013, approximately 1,800 students graduated from our six high schools. A total of about 1,900 students were in the classes of 2012. In 2011, approximately 1,670 students graduated from five high schools. From 2011 to 2013, the number of graduates increased by about 130 or 7.2 percent increase over the three year period. Our newest high school, Veterans High, graduated its first class in 2012.

Of our 38 Schools:

- 23 primary and elementary schools serve grades Pre-K through 5
- 8 middle schools serve grades 6 through 8
- 6 high schools serve grades nine through 12 and
- 1 alternative school serves middle and high school student.

In addition, another site - the Elberta Center - serves as a GNET satellite program for special needs students in grades K-8, as well as for credit-deficient high school students.

Other district demographics are:

- Economically disadvantaged: 53.65 percent
- Students with Disabilities: approximately 11 percent
- Enrolled in Gifted Program: approximately 14 percent
- English Language Learners: 2.8 percent (34 different languages are spoken as our students' native language.)
- Gender: 48.45 percent female, 51.55 percent male
- Ethnicity:
 - Asian - 2.75 percent
 - American Indian - .20 percent
 - Hispanic - 7.53 percent
 - Black - 36.13 percent
 - White - 49.01 percent
 - Multiracial - 4.39 percent.

Of our 3,826 employees, 2,150 are certified, with 2,003 serving as teachers. Of our 2,150 certified staff members:

- 3 hold a teaching permit
- 592 have a bachelor's degree
- 871 a master's degree

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- 582 a specialist degree and
- 102 a doctorate degree.

For four consecutive years, 100 percent of Houston County teachers and paraprofessionals have been deemed Highly Qualified by the Georgia Department of Education. The most recent Georgia Department of Education Report Card, 2010-2011 ([http://reportcard2011.gaosa.org/\(S\(2k5truu2pbe4ekmzfkfz1m5w\)\)/k12/persfiscal.aspx?TestType=pers&ID=676:ALL](http://reportcard2011.gaosa.org/(S(2k5truu2pbe4ekmzfkfz1m5w))/k12/persfiscal.aspx?TestType=pers&ID=676:ALL)), shows the following staff statistics:

- Income: administrators earn an average annual salary of \$84,866
- Income: teachers earn an average annual salary of \$53,967
- Gender of administrators: 60.6 percent are female and 39.3 percent are male
- Gender of teachers: 80.9 percent are female and 19.1 percent are male
- Ethnicity of all employees:
 - Asian - .033 percent
 - Native American - .033 percent
 - Hispanic - 1.36 percent
 - Black - 18.6 percent
 - White - 79 percent
 - Multiracial - .033 percent.

Houston County was incorporated May 15, 1821, as Georgia's 51st county. Georgia's sixty-fifth largest county in total area, it covers 377 square miles. Houston County is the 15th most populated county in the state of Georgia out of 159 counties. The county consists of three municipalities - Warner Robins, Perry and Centerville - and many unincorporated communities such as Bonaire, Kathleen and Elko. Perry, the county seat and geographic center of the state of Georgia, was incorporated in 1824 as Houston's first official town. Warner Robins is consistently ranked as one of the most affordable places to buy a home in the entire U.S. In addition, the diverse make-up of its population has earned Warner Robins the nickname, "The International City."

In 2012 and 2011, Houston County was named one of America's Promise Alliance's 100 Best Communities for Young People. The national awards were given to Houston in recognition of its outstanding and innovative work in addressing the high school dropout crisis and for programs and services that make it an outstanding place for youth to live, learn and grow.

According to the U.S. Census, the 2012 population is estimated at 146,136, an increase of 4.4 percent since 2010 when the population was 139,900. From the 2000 Census to 2010, the population increased by 26.3 percent. The median age is 34.5 years with persons under 18 representing 26.3 percent of the population and seniors age 65 and older representing 10.5 percent. Females represent 51.3 percent of residents. The racial makeup is: white - 65.1 percent, black - 29.2 percent, American Indian/Alaska Native - .4 percent, Asian - 2.6 percent, native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander - .2 percent, two or more races - 2.4 percent, and Hispanic - 6.2 percent. Those who speak a language other than English represent 7.6 percent of the population.

In 2011, the median household income was \$55,738. The per capita income in 2011 was \$25,329. Persons below the poverty level represent 12.7 percent of the population. The median home value was \$134,200, with 68.1 percent owning a home. As of 2011, 87.5 percent of those 25 years of age or older had earned a high school diploma or higher, with 24.5 percent having earned a bachelor's degree or higher. A total of 18,150 veterans call Houston home. (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/13153.html>)

Many opportunities exist in the area of higher education. Several colleges offer advanced education opportunities in Houston County. A Middle Georgia State College campus is located in Warner Robins. The county is also home to Middle Georgia Technical College which

offers our students dual enrollment opportunities. Georgia Military College, Georgia College and State University, Embry-Riddle and Fort Valley State University also offer degrees locally.

In 2009, the labor force (employed or actively seeking work) numbered 181,486. Of this number, 165,912 were employed. (http://www.houstoncountygga.net/documents/Houston2009_000.pdf) The 2010 unemployment rate was at 7.6 percent. In 2011, Houston County's unemployment rate was about the same, at 7.8 percent, lower than the state's 8.9 percent (http://www.houstoncountygga.net/cp_workforce-demo.htm). As of July 2013, the county's rate had increased to 8.1 percent, a slight increase over three years prior when it was 7.8 percent in July 2010.

Houston County fares better than the state because it lies within one of the most impressive workforce regions of the state, with a strong mix of employers in the aerospace, healthcare, manufacturing, service, and construction sectors. Home to Robins Air Force Base (RAFB), Georgia's largest single employer has 5,841 military members and 15,285 civilians for a total workforce of 18,158. The community lives its motto EDIMGIAFAD - Every Day in Middle Georgia is Armed Forces Appreciation Day.

The total economic impact of RAFB on Georgia for fiscal year 2012 was estimated at \$2.9 billion. The top base contractors are: Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon. Outside of RAFB, the largest employers include the Houston County Board of Education, Frito Lay, Houston Healthcare Complex, Perdue Farms and Walmart. Other local businesses include Anchor Glass, CEMEX, Graphics Packaging International and Cascade Corporation.

System's Purpose

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

Our mission is to produce high-achieving students. Our vision is that our district will be world-class. Each year our Board reviews our mission, vision and beliefs. Our mission was originally created during a Board goal setting session held April 3, 2004. The vision was created in 2006. The mission and vision continue to reflect our purpose and support our focus of Teaching and Learning.

Our beliefs are:

- Safety is our number one priority.
- Failure is not an option. We do expect that all children can learn.
- We will not be satisfied until all of our schools meet or exceed the highest academic standards.
- We are committed to determining what each child needs to fulfill his potential.
- We take responsibility for learning, for both our students and ourselves.
- We are not afraid of change and will embrace change that is research-based and proven to be effective.

We also emphasize The Houston County Way which influences and creates our culture. Emphasized and embodied by past and current district leaders, The Houston County Way is:

- Strive for excellence in all that we do.
- Have a professional attitude.
- Go the extra mile.
- Base decisions on what's best for the child.
- Provide quality customer service.
- Hard work, dedication and love for children.
- Approach work every day with a positive attitude, hope, enthusiasm and compassion.
- Do things right. Do the right thing.

Our mission, vision, and beliefs are consistently communicated to all of our employees. The superintendent announces them at every Opening Session held the first day of pre-planning. Schools post them for the entire school family, to include students. Employees are given our credo cards, and the public is informed via slideshows, websites, social media such as Facebook, and the BOE TV channels broadcast in the Cox and ComSouth customer areas.

Educators and support staff members strive for excellence and help students perform at their highest ability. Our programs are tailored to all levels of students, from Pre-K to dual enrollment and from special needs to gifted and talented students. Everything that we do - from the classroom to extracurricular activities to support staff work - is in support of our purpose.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

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

The district is in the midst of implementing a 2012-2017 Education - Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, e-SPLOST, plan which was approved by voters on Nov. 8, 2011. Of the 9,161 votes cast, 72 percent voted in favor of the proposal. The focus is on technology, safety and security and facilities improvements. The tax is for five years or until a cap of \$125 million is reached. The funds are generated by a 1-cent sales tax paid by all who shop within the county. It began in April 2012 when the previous e-SPLOST, which started in 2007, ended. Houston County voters previously approved e-SPLOST referendums in 1997, 2001 and 2005.

The priority was to bring the district's technology up to 21st century standards. Our district was falling behind in technology, but the e-SPLOST provided the funds to update hardware and software. The bulk of the technology projects were accomplished in 2012-13. Last year we ramped up our networks' infrastructures to support the vast amount of technology added to classrooms. Classrooms received: 2,400 computers, 904 Interactive Boards, 523 Projectors and 998 Document Cameras. In addition, we provided approximately 2,500 more computers to 93 labs, as well as 53 portable interactive boards and approximately 1,000 audio systems. A new Student Information System - Infinite Campus - was implemented, a vast improvement over the green-screen DOS based program which had been used for decades.

To address safety and security, 19 schools are receiving secured vestibules. As of June 2012, installation of secured school entrances, which direct visitors through the main office, began. Additional cameras and doors accessible by card installations began in June 2012.

Many facilities improvements have been completed as detailed on our website at <http://www.hcbe.net/facilities/splost.aspx>. Between June 2012 and October 2013, HVAC units that are 18 years or older were replaced at 16 campuses with new units that are more efficient and quieter and also offer improved indoor air quality. McConnell-Talbert Stadium was renovated this past summer. Currently 14 schools are receiving new hallway paint and flooring, with a targeted completion date of January 2014. In addition, gyms at six schools were upgraded by October 2012, with 17 more to receive gym upgrades between August 2013 and February 2015.

Two new schools are funded by the e-SPLOST. C.B. Watson Primary School opened August 2013, and Langston Road Elementary School will open come fall 2014. Houston County High School, which was built in 1991, is slated for a complete and total renovation within the next three years. Plans also include building a central bus facility as well as a sports facility consisting of a stadium and central tennis facility.

Although curb appeal is important, it's what takes place in the classroom that sets our district apart. Realtors and new residents often tell us that our district's reputation for delivering quality education is the main draw for people moving into Houston County. Consistently our test scores outperform state averages. On the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test, we routinely score better than the state average on all 30 tests, for every subject and every grade. On End-of-Course Tests, our district outscored the state on all eight EOCTs. On the 5th grade writing assessment, district wide our students scored 91 percent, 12 points more than the state average. On the 8th grade writing assessment, district wide our students scored 87 percent, and the district average for our high school writing test scores was 95 percent.

We are especially proud of our Advanced Placement (AP) program with scores that outperform national and global averages. In 2013, we scored 3.0, above the U.S. average of 2.89 and the global 2.91. In 2013, we gave 1,384 AP exams - qualifying scores saved our parents an estimated \$2 million in college tuition. The AP program is set to grow substantially over the next three years with a \$2.9 million grant, awarded in collaboration with RAFB, for the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI). This grant will greatly expand our AP program at all

of our high schools and middle schools. This three-year initiative will ensure that more students are provided rigorous coursework to help them succeed in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics - STEM - fields as well as English. Enrollment in math, science, and English AP courses is expected to increase by 75.6 percent district-wide this year - from 890 to 1,563 students. Qualifying scores in AP courses are expected to increase by 127 percent over three years, from 419 to 952 exams with a score of three or higher.

Another exciting change this school year has to do with our gifted and talented education for our elementary children. This year our students began attending gifted education classes every school day instead of only one day a week as in the past. This provides our gifted and talented students with 180 days of higher level instruction, far more than the former model which provided about 32 days of enrichment instruction a school year. This also enables us to offer more children the opportunity to participate in gifted and talented education. We have shifted from a Resource Pull-out Model to an Advanced Content Model, the same model we have been using for our gifted and talented students in grades 6 through 12. In preparation for this expansion, approximately 110 of our teachers are in the process of earning their gifted endorsement. Our elementary GTE teachers in all 23 schools are utilizing CCGPS and Houston County curriculum and authentic project-based learning. Teachers are collaborating and using additional resources to serve the needs of these students. The end result will be that students will spend more time with highly-qualified teachers who will enrich, enhance and extend the curriculum, what we call "E cubed."

Our students are also being given more latitude in using technology to learn at school. This year we implemented Bring Your Own Device, or BYOD, which encourages students to bring their personal technology tools to school to use for learning. BYOD is a voluntary program for our teachers and students. Teachers who so choose may invite their students to bring their laptops, smartphones, tablet computers and e-readers to school. Our students' personal devices are infusing even more technology into our classrooms, complementing our smart boards, desktops, and document cameras already in use and engaging them more in classroom learning. Our students will also learn new ways to collaborate and interact with their teachers and classmates as they conduct research, solve problems, create products, and publish their work. In preparation for this initiative, we expanded our district's wireless infrastructure so that every school now has a guest BYOD wireless access point that provides filtered Internet access. We also piloted BYOD this past spring at four schools with excellent results and positive responses. BYOD will be phased in district wide over the school year, beginning with seven schools the first nine weeks.

With the new CCGPS curriculum comes new assessments not only for our students, but also for our teachers and administrators. Teacher Keys and Leader Keys are new performance assessments which are mandated by law to be used beginning the 2014-15 school year. This year, our administrators are piloting this evaluation instrument with several teachers at each school. Training was provided in August and September 2013 to our administrators. The new instrument will be used district wide next year.

Edge Academy is another initiative. This credit recover program targets our academically at risk high school students who have fallen behind at least 5 credits. Students are chosen by their home school based on academic need. Edge Academy's coursework is online, rigorous, individualized, teacher-led and mastery-based. The courses are taught by highly-qualified teachers who work individually with each student to customize instruction to help them earn the credits they need to return to their home school.

An operations change which was implemented January 2013 was the opening of a central registration site. Beginning Jan. 14, 2013, registration for all new students and students changing school zones was offered at one site with an overall goal to improve customer service. This central site helps expedite the process, ensures consistency across all 38 of our schools, and makes it more convenient for those with children in more than one school. The International Welcome Center is also located at this site, and the district's Homeless Liaison serves our homeless families at this central location.

A new benefit offered to all of our employees this year is a free gym membership with a company that offers three locations in Houston. At Opening Session, Superintendent Dr. Robin Hines encouraged all employees to take time to take care of themselves. This is a win-win

program expected to result in healthier, happier employees and lower absenteeism.

An initiative to begin at the beginning of the in 2014-2015 school year is the reorganization of three of our at-risk elementary schools which have highly mobile populations. Lindsey Elementary, Westside Elementary and Parkwood Elementary zones will become one school zone with grade configurations of PreK-1, 2-3 and 4-5. The reorganization will allow everyone in the school, from the custodians to teachers and administrators, to focus on the particular developmental needs of the ages of the children assigned to the school. This will also enable each school to narrow its focus on initiatives targeted for the needs of their specific students. Greater collaboration opportunities will be offered per grade level since more teachers will be on each grade level offering more expertise and opportunities to share ideas. Scheduling will be more flexible and thus easier to meet the needs of students with EIPs and those in special education or gifted and talented classes. The focus on the needs of the children will be streamlined for professional learning and resources for students. This new organization will also enable the schools to focus Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports toward the particular needs of the students served in the school. In addition, mobility issues between the three schools will decrease, and an after school program will be housed at one school but serve all three schools.

Additional Information

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

The district is fortunate to have an outstanding Board of Education. All seven members are very committed to the district mission, vision and beliefs. Since 2004, our Board has been deemed a Distinguished School Board by the Georgia School Boards Association, GSBA. In July 2012, GSBA announced a new awards program effective this year, and our district is now seeking Quality Board Recognition. The winners will be announced this December.

Our district wins countless state and national awards year after year. Of our 38 schools, 23 have been named Georgia Schools of Excellence for a total of 39 times. In addition, 15 elementary schools have been awarded the School Bell Award by the Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals in recognition of exemplary programs in the areas of curriculum and organizational leadership. Many of our employees and students serve at the state level. For example, four of our students were chosen to serve on State School Superintendent Dr. John Barge's 2013-2014 Student Advisory Council. Only 50 were chosen statewide to advise Superintendent Barge on how state policies impact the classroom and to serve as the Superintendent's ambassadors in their respective schools.

The most recent national and state awards - from 2012-2013 - are highlighted below.

- Feagin Mill Middle School Principal Dr. Jesse Davis was named Georgia's 2013 National Distinguished Principal.

- Northside High School made the U.S. News & World Report list of the best high schools in the country and was awarded a silver medal.

- Shirley Hills Elementary won first place in the poster presenter competition at the National Youth-At-Risk Conference.

- A Perry High student won a Silver Medal from the national Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for his work titled "Bicycle." Three Perry High students also won regional Scholastic Gold Key awards.

- Several schools won national FCCLA awards:
 - Bonaire Middle won two national Gold medals and two Silver medals, plus the National Middle School Career Connection Award
 - Bonaire Middle also won the 2013 Otis Spunkmeyer O-riginals Recipe Contest
 - Thomson Middle won Gold and Silver medals
 - Feagin Mill Middle won Gold
 - Houston County High won 3 Gold medals, with one student earning a perfect score of 100 in the Early Childhood Education STAR Event and winning \$10,000 in college scholarships, and
 - a Career Academy & Warner Robins High dual enrolled student won Gold

- Lake Joy Elementary teacher Dennis Peavy was one of only eight teachers in the U.S. honored by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for exceptional efforts to encourage agricultural literacy.

- All five of our high schools were named AP STEM Schools. Four were also named AP STEM Achievement Schools: Houston County High, Northside High, Perry High and Veterans High.

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- Shirley Hills Elementary was named a Reward School by the Georgia Department of Education.
- Both Miller Elementary and Morningside Elementary were presented the Family-Friendly Partnership School Award by the Georgia Department of Education.
- Lake Joy Primary and Morningside Elementary won School Bell Awards
- Perry Primary School and Perry Middle School won awards in the Governor's Georgia SHAPE Honor Roll Program. Perry Primary won Silver medal and Perry Middle won Bronze.
- Several schools earned Industry Certification:
 - Early Childhood Education: Northside High
 - Marketing: Houston County High, Northside High and Warner Robins High
 - Business & Computer Science: Houston County Career Academy, Houston County High, Northside High, Perry High and Warner Robins High.
- Bonaire Middle and Feagin Mill Middle students won 1st place at the Georgia Science and Engineering Fair.
- Northside High won the Georgia High School Association Class AAAAA State Literary Meet competition plus three students won first-place individual awards.
- Houston County High's FFA team won first place in the Georgia State Dairy Cattle Evaluation Career Development Event.
- Perry Middle FFA were the Livestock Evaluation State Champions for the Jr. Division
- Bonaire Middle's Beta Club won six state awards, plus their sponsor, Cynthia Davis, was elected to serve as the State Jr. Beta Club Sponsor-Elect.
- Northside High won first place for high schools in the annual Academic Bowl held at the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site in Plains, Ga.
- Mossy Creek Middle won first place for middle schools in the annual Jimmy Carter National Historic Academic Bowl
- Thirteen of our students were selected for All-State Band from Feagin Mill Middle, Perry Middle, Houston County High, Northside High, Veterans High, and Warner Robins High.
- Eleven students from our schools were selected for All-State Chorus from Bonaire Middle, Thomson Middle, Veterans High and Warner Robins High.
- A Perry High student represented the State of Georgia in the National Poetry Out Loud contest after winning first place in the state competition
- Northside High won the State One-Act competition for AAAAA schools. This was Northside High's seventeenth State Championship in the one-act competition since 1978.

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- Our Houston County Sharks won three GHSA/AAASP Varsity State Wheelchair Championships - Handball, Basketball and Football. The team has now won eight state championships since the team began competing in 2008!

- Houston County High won the AAAAA State Cheerleading Championship

- Veterans High won the AAAA State Cheerleading Championship.

- Mossy Creek Middle and Warner Robins High students won first place in the "Digging Peanuts in Plains" postcard contest and were presented the awards by President Jimmy Carter.

- Eli Walker, a Houston County Career Academy and Middle Georgia Technical College dual enrollment teacher, was awarded the Dual Enrollment Instructor of the Year for the state of Georgia.

- Bonaire Middle's Alice Mullis won the Georgia Association of Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences (GATFACS) Outstanding Teacher in Community Service Award

- Two Northside Elementary teachers were designated 2013 Georgia Master Teachers, recognizing them among the state's best teachers. Two of only 58 teachers named state-wide in 2013, Houston County currently has 34 Georgia Master Teachers.

- Huntington Middle School Principal Dr. Gwendolyn Taylor was selected as the Second Vice President of the Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals

- Our Community Relations Department won seven top state awards of five Gold awards and two "best of the best." Most recently, the Georgia School Nutrition Association awarded the 2013 Media Award to our Community Relations Director who was named the winner from 19 statewide nominees.

- Our School Nutrition Program won a southeast region USDA award and two state awards.

- Teaching & Learning won the Georgia Economics Program of Excellence award from the Georgia Council on Economic Education.

- Human Resources won a State Gold Award for our Recruitment Processes & Materials.

- Cindy Flesher is the President of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders.

- Dr. Mark Scott is serving as President-Elect of the Georgia Association of School Personnel Administrators.

- Dr. Amy Fouse is president-elect of the Georgia Curriculum and Instructional Supervisors.

Self Assessment

Introduction

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

Purpose and Direction

The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Overall Rating: 2.75

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	The system's process for review, revision, and communication of the purpose statement is documented. The process is formalized and implemented on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement focuses on student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •District purpose statements - past and present •Survey results •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness •Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the district's purpose 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process for review, revision, and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor and maintain data about each school and provide feedback for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements •Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement •Examples of written stakeholder communications or marketing materials that portray the school purpose and direction 	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is evident in documentation and decision making. This commitment is regularly reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership and staff share high expectations for professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders about educational programs and equitable learning experiences •Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans •Survey results •Statements or documents about ethical and professional practices •Statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning •The district strategic plan 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	Most leaders throughout the system implement a continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. Some stakeholder groups are engaged in the process. School personnel maintain a profile with data on student, school, and system performance. The profile contains data used to identify goals for the improvement of achievement and instruction that are aligned with the system's purpose. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Most interventions and strategies are implemented with fidelity. Some documentation that the process yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of schools continuous improvement plans •Survey results •Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings •The district data profile •The district strategic plan 	Level 2

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

Areas of Strength

The mission of the Houston County Board of Education clearly focuses on student success. The mission of Houston County is to produce high-achieving students. The district's vision is to be world class. The Houston County Goal Alignment and Strategic Plan provides a common framework to guide each school in its individual pursuit of producing high-achieving students and continuous school improvement.

The formalized process for review of the Houston County School District purpose is implemented on a regular basis involving all stakeholders in the process. The process is cyclical and includes strategic planning retreats for board members held twice a year, in August and

February. The board retreats focus on a variety of items, including review of Board Code of Ethics and the mission and vision statements. In attendance at the board retreat are all members of the Executive Cabinet, representing each department and area, all members of the Board of Education, and community news agencies and stakeholders.

Mission and vision statements are reviewed to ensure communication of the purpose and direction of the school district. In addition, the mission and vision statements are published for all stakeholders through multiple means. Teachers and staff display the mission and vision statements in classrooms and in district and school offices. The mission statement is reflected in the HCBE logo and is published on all newsletters and public service announcements to the community. It is available for viewing on the district website and on district letterhead. A credo card has been developed that outlines the district mission and vision as well as the district's beliefs. The credo card is published and made available to stakeholders and all district faculty and staff. Faculty and staff use the card to emphasize the district's mission to produce high-achieving students and the vision that our district will be world class. All new teachers to the district receive a credo card. In addition, all substitutes receive a copy of the card as part of substitute training. The mission and vision are reviewed at annual events such as New Teacher Orientation and Opening Session as well as the end of the year at the Leadership Summit.

Each school year starts with an opening session attended by all administrators, teachers, and community member representatives. The session includes a year-in-review address by the Superintendent, celebrating not only the academic achievements of the past year, but also successes of individual schools, students, and leaders that demonstrate a commitment to ensuring all students are college and career ready. In addition, opening session allows all district staff to celebrate together with the introduction of Staff of the Year from support entities such as bus drivers and monitors, maintenance, custodial staff, nutrition staff, and also Teachers of the Year from each school, followed by the announcement of the district Teacher of The Year.

In addition to the many individual achievements, the district consistently scores above the state in every content area and on every test. The district is proud of student achievement in and out of the classroom setting. These accomplishments demonstrate that communicating high expectations results in student success for all.

Each school year concludes with the Leadership Summit, which is conducted to allow school leadership teams to collaborate with one another in district training that is focused on the district non-negotiables and the continuous improvement process. More than 500 participants consisting of district administrators, school administrators, and teacher leaders attend each year. The feedback from the work at the Leadership Summit allows the district to move forward in the continuous improvement process, ensuring that individual and school professional learning needs are met in order to continue to produce high-achieving students.

HCBE policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process for review, revision and communication of the purpose for student success. Administrators and Better Seeking Team members at each school assist with the school improvement plan and review the district strategic plan. School improvement plans are used to guide continuous improvement. Additionally, principals participate in continuous professional learning through LEADing Edge sessions. They lead teacher leaders through the continuous improvement process with the support of Better Seeking Team members. Better Seeking team members utilize teacher leader skills to redeliver information and receive feedback from the staff at large on the continuous improvement process, involving the whole school in meeting the school and district mission and vision.

The district demonstrates a commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning as is evident in documentation and decision making. The district communicates regularly with staff and stakeholders through a weekly Teaching and Learning bulletin, through the district website, news releases, monthly BOE reports, and recognition of student achievement at each monthly BOE meeting. Additionally, parent engagement is encouraged through the use of social media such as Edmodo, Facebook, and Twitter. The district and schools also utilize a call-out system to inform parents of teaching and learning initiatives that align with the district mission and vision. The superintendent publishes a monthly newsletter to share successes, updates, and notification of upcoming events.

The district is committed to providing challenging and equitable educational programs and learning experiences so that all students achieve learning, critical thinking, and life skills necessary for success. HCBE has a strong Advanced Placement Program. All five high schools provide Advanced Placement classes, and students from across the county sit for Advanced Placement exams. HCBE has joined in a partnership with the National Math and Science Initiative in order to provide valuable professional development for Advanced Placement and Pre-Advanced Placement teachers in grades 6-10, increasing enrollment and scores of the students in Advanced Placement classes. Early Intervention, English Speakers of Other Languages, Remedial Education, Title I and Special Education programs are provided for students who need learning support. The district's Response to Intervention process ensures that students receive supports at all levels so that the mission of producing high-achieving students can be achieved. Houston County is encouraging schools to become Science Technology Engineering Math certified. Nineteen Career Technical and Agricultural Education programs are currently industry certified, and five Career Technical and Agricultural Education programs are expected to achieve industry certification during FY 14. The district proudly supports award winning fine arts programs and award winning athletic programs.

The district leadership and staff are committed to a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning. The district implements and embraces state adopted Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. The district supports the use of a variety of methods to assist teachers in being well prepared in the classrooms and encourages participation in subject area cadres. Three county-wide technology support personnel, Curriculum Integration Specialists, support teachers in integrating technology in the classrooms to support teaching and learning.

District and school leaders demonstrate high expectations for professional practice as evidenced by the school and district improvement plans, professional learning plans, survey results, and the accomplishments outlined in the Executive Summary. The Director of Testing and Instructional Technology provides data analysis and creates reports providing feedback for the schools, giving them the opportunity to analyze their data and determine possible areas for improvement. District and school leaders review data regularly to ensure the district remains focused on continuous improvement. District leaders collect and monitor data from each school and provide evaluative data in a variety of ways. The results are used in conducting the district and school level needs assessments and finding root causes. As part of the district's monitoring of the continuous improvement process, principals meet face-to-face with executive cabinet members twice a year to ensure alignment of school improvement plans with the district strategic plan. In addition, the district has implemented a five-year plan to evaluate all schools using the Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards instrument as a means of monitoring implementation of the district and school improvement plans.

Areas of Needs Improvement

This year the continuous improvement process included representatives from all stakeholder groups. However, the district will attempt to increase two-way stakeholder collaboration and communication to ensure student success.

Actions to Sustain Strength

The district has a commitment to the continuous improvement process. Processes for continuing to review and align school improvement initiatives to the district initiatives continues to be a strength for the district. Schools meet regularly as leadership teams and are making strides to involve more stakeholders in the decision making process. The district maintains a commitment to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of improvement initiatives in an effort to stay on its mission to produce high-achieving students. Initiatives such as the National Math and Science Initiative and Response to Intervention will continue to strengthen, demonstrating that HCBE desires for all students to be college and career ready and to achieve the vision to be a world-class system.

Plans for Improvement

The district has implemented a more systematic and structured approach to increase stakeholder collaboration to ensure student success. Shared decision making efforts include a more accessible website as well as uses of social media wherever possible. The district continues to invite stakeholders to view planning documents and to share their thoughts and expertise in moving the district forward as a major hub in the community at large. These efforts are documented through sign-in sheets, agendas, and feedback cards from attendees.

Governance and Leadership

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

Overall Rating: 3.33

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	Policies and practices clearly and directly support the system's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices require and have mechanisms in place for monitoring conditions that support student learning, effective instruction, and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices requiring and giving direction for professional growth of all staff. Policies and practices provide clear requirements, direction for, and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Professional development plans •Student handbooks •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •Staff handbooks •District operations manuals •Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions •School handbooks 	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	The governing body has implemented a process to evaluate its decisions and actions to ensure they are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a formally adopted code of ethics, and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members are required to participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The professional development curriculum also includes conflict resolution, decision-making, supervision and evaluation, and fiscal responsibility. Members comply with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations and function as a cohesive unit for the benefit of effective system operation and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Proof of legal counsel •Governing authority training plan •Assurances, certifications •Historical compliance data •Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest 	Level 4

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

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

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders communicate effectively with appropriate and varied representatives from stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback and respond to stakeholders, work collaboratively on system and school improvement efforts, and provide and support meaningful leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' efforts result in measurable, active stakeholder participation, engagement in the system and its schools, a sense of community, and ownership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action•Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys•Survey responses•Communication plan•Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan	Level 3

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

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

Areas of Strength

The Houston County School District operates under governance and leadership that support and focus on student achievement and district effectiveness. The Board of Education members adopt policies and procedures to guide the administration of the school district in accordance with the law, state BOE rules, and the educational needs of students. HCBE works collaboratively with district and school leadership to produce high-achieving students.

One of the district's strengths is that policies and procedures support the district's vision and mission. Policies and procedures are revised to reflect changes needed to continue to align the district with its stated vision and mission. While new policy or changes in policy are sometimes generated by changes in law or state BOE rules, they may be generated at the request of district and school leadership, the BOE, or community stakeholders. All new policies are presented as part of the monthly board agenda and left for review for a period of 30 days, giving stakeholders an opportunity to give input to the board. Working closely with both state-wide and local contracted attorneys ensures that all policies and procedures are in compliance with local, state, and national laws. Finalized policies must be approved by the governing body. All board meetings are open to the public and announced through the district website and local media generated by the district's Director of Community and School Affairs. Board meetings are streamed live, available for public viewing, and archived for public access. Meeting agendas and supporting documents are also published on eBoard. The Superintendent also writes a monthly newsletter to the community as a tool to publicize policy changes. The district's policies can be accessed and searched online by any stakeholder with internet access. All policy revisions are then presented to the principals at monthly meetings. Principals, in turn, take this information back to their schools to share with teachers and other stakeholders. All schools provide student handbooks in English and Spanish which outline

approved policies and procedures.

The Board of Education has implemented processes to evaluate its effectiveness and to ensure they are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities. The governing body supports each school's leadership in running the day-to-day operations of school. If issues or concerns arise from parents or community stakeholders, the governing body directs these conversations to the appropriate personnel. BOE members sign a code of ethics as well as participate in professional development. The district's governing body completes nine hours of formal training a year through the Georgia School Board Association as outlined by policy. BOE members and central office leadership attend retreats during the year where members may receive further professional learning regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body. Additional training for the governing body has included an outside evaluator who reviewed the district strategic plan, alignment of district beliefs and mission, and the overall planning process involved in the district's strategic planning. The evaluator reviews this plan and monitors the alignment of actions, procedures, and measurable outcomes. The training for the Board and Executive Cabinet involves determining strengths and weaknesses of the district strategic plan and incorporates the BOE's priorities. Once the BOE shares their priorities, the evaluator reviews the plan, showing the alignment of priorities and the district strategic plan. The evaluator provides a visual walkthrough of how the district's plan is aligned to goal areas to accomplish the district's mission and beliefs.

The leadership and staff at all levels of the district foster a culture consistent with the district's purpose and direction. District and school leadership align decisions and actions in a consistent manner. The Superintendent and BOE develop district priorities that are incorporated into the district strategic plan. This plan helps guide the budgeting process while keeping the established priorities at the forefront of this planning. The budget is developed and presented to the BOE for discussion. A budget update is provided at each monthly work session and is available to the public as well. Each item on the monthly board agenda shows alignment to the district strategic plan by providing the related goals and performance objectives. The Teaching and Learning board agenda provides the goal area, objective, initiative, and person responsible for each item of information. School leadership and staff complete year-end surveys as a way to provide feedback to the central office staff to inform instructional decisions.

All Houston County schools are required to have a comprehensive school improvement plan aligned with the district strategic plan. The district strategic plan is reviewed and revised by all central office departments and then presented to the governing body and school leadership for their input and feedback. The plan is then revised again to reflect this feedback. The Houston County Strategic Plan and performance goals are data driven. In order to evaluate district effectiveness and impact on student performance, the Superintendent and Executive Cabinet meet twice a year with each principal to thoroughly review their school improvement plan which includes budgetary items to reflect school goals. In February, principals return in vertically-aligned teams to reflect on the progress they have made for meeting the goals they have set. Principals share their goals with each other and make revisions if needed. School improvement plans are revised each summer and throughout the school year as needed.

The Houston County school district believes in involving community stakeholders in the decision-making process to increase student achievement for all students. In 2013, all five Houston County high schools were awarded the National Math and Science Initiative grant. This grant will enable Advanced Placement teachers to receive additional training and resources to teach Advanced Placement classes in math, science, and English. In turn, more students will take Advanced Placement classes which will prepare them for the demands of college and careers. This grant was awarded through the collaboration of Robins Air Force Base and the Houston County school district. In 2012, an ESPLOST for technology was approved by community stakeholders. One of the district's goals has been to update the technology infrastructure in district schools. The district has been acutely aware that this has been a district weakness. With the passing of

the ESPLOST, computers have been refreshed or purchased, new technology has been installed, and more students have become engaged in using the technology to enhance their learning. Title II-A surveys are sent to all certificated staff and administrators and parents within the district. Survey data and assessment data are analyzed and used in the strategic planning process and in the development of the Title IIA LEA Equity Plan. As the Equity and Comprehensive LEA Instructional Plan is revised, stakeholder representatives from each content area provide input related to needs and professional learning. In addition, stakeholders are invited on multiple occasions to give feedback and suggestions surrounding district plans.

Areas in Need of Improvement

The district strives to effectively and successfully operate with the guidance of the governing body, central office leadership, and school administrators. As the district continues to produce high-achieving students, it will look for additional ways to engage stakeholders in decision making and solicit input and feedback. The district will continue to update policies as needs arise and ensure that procedures manuals are revised accordingly to reflect evolving educational demands.

Actions to Sustain Strength

The district will continue to align initiatives to goal areas as outlined by the district's strategic plan. Each school will continue to use a cyclical process to align its school improvement plan to the district strategic plan. A new strategic plan template has been created to facilitate the creation of each school's school improvement plan in a user-friendly format. The governing body will continue to align its priorities to the district plan, which in turn is aligned to each school's school improvement plan. The governing body, central office leadership, and school leadership will continue to work together to provide effective educational opportunities for the district's students.

Plans for Improvement

The district holds a district Open House annually as a way to share information with parents and solicit feedback. Stakeholders will be encouraged and reminded to use social media and the district website to provide feedback. A process for updating procedures manuals will be developed as a way to ensure that they are updated in a timely fashion and easily accessed by all system and school personnel.

Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Overall Rating: 2.5

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	Curriculum and learning experiences in each course/class provide all students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills. There is some evidence to indicate curriculum and learning experiences prepare students for success at the next level. Like courses/classes have equivalent learning expectations across the system. Teachers in all schools individualize some learning activities for each student in a way that supports achievement of expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Course, program, or school schedules •Course or program descriptions •Lesson plans •Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	Using data from student assessments and an examination of professional practice, system and school personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose. There is a process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction, and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level. The continuous improvement process ensures that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Curriculum guides •Common assessments •Standards-based report cards •Program descriptions •Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices •Curriculum writing process •Profile of educational model or delivery system •Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps •Comprehensive Literacy Instructional Framework 	Level 3

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

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

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	All system staff participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both informally and formally. Collaboration often occurs across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions. Staff members have been trained to implement a formal process that promotes discussion about student learning and the conditions that support student learning. Learning, using, and discussing the results of inquiry practices such as action research, the examination of student work, reflection, study teams, and peer coaching occur regularly among most system personnel. System personnel indicate that collaboration causes improvement results in instructional practice, system effectiveness, and student performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Common language, protocols and reporting tools •Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees •Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings •Professional development funding to promote professional learning communities •Peer coaching guidelines and procedures •Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning •Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration •Examples of cross curricular or program projects, interdisciplinary instruction, and classroom action research projects 	Level 3

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

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

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	Programs that engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education are designed and implemented. System and school personnel regularly inform families of their children's learning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Performance-based report cards •Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days •Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress •Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	Most school personnel participate in a structure designed by the system that gives them interaction with individual students, allowing them to build relationships over time with the student. Most students participate in the structure. The structure allows the school employee to gain insight into the student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Description of formalized structures for adults to advocate on behalf of students •Master schedule with time for formalized structure 	Level 2

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	Most teachers across the system use common grading and reporting policies, processes, and procedures based on criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These policies, processes, and procedures are implemented in most or all schools across grade levels and courses. Most stakeholders are aware of the policies, processes, and procedures. The policies, processes, and procedures may or may not be evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices•Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting•Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs•Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	Most staff members participate in a program of professional learning that is aligned with the system's purpose and direction. Professional development is based on needs of the system. The program builds capacity among staff members who participate. The program is regularly evaluated for effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Evaluation tools for professional learning•District professional development plan involving the district and all schools•Title IIA Plan	Level 2

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

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

Areas of Strength

The district ensures the alignment of the curriculum through the implementation of the state-adopted standards in all content areas. The content area standards are adopted by the state of Georgia and are designed to provide students with knowledge and skills for proficiency. To support instruction, the district has an entire department devoted to areas of teaching and learning. Content coordinators for each subject area are a part of the Teaching and Learning Department that provide instructional expertise and support to teachers and school administrators in order to promote the implementation of best practices.

Teachers and administrators have received specific content area training related to grade-level specific state standards. All teachers are
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provided access to Houston County curriculum documents on the district intranet portal. Through this portal, district teachers can also access the curriculum documents which contain standards, essential questions, pacing guides, unit plans, assessments, and other instructional resources. To ensure challenging learning experiences for all students, these district curriculum resources are reviewed and/or revised annually based on state guidelines and district data. When revisions are necessary, teacher leaders from across the district collaborate to adjust curriculum resources accordingly. To provide leadership and guidance for this process, Central Office administrators serve as facilitators during curriculum writing sessions.

District-wide administrator meetings are structured to promote professional learning centered on the Response to Intervention process and adjusting instruction to meet the needs of all students. Tier 1 is differentiated based on formative assessments. Students are identified for Tier 2 interventions based on triangulation of data which include a universal screener, teacher observation, and academic performance. The district Response to Intervention process includes extensive training that focuses on analyzing and using results to positively impact teaching and learning, while also increasing student achievement for all students. Comprehensive training for district staff ensures a consistent, systematic approach to the Response to Intervention process. Representatives from each school participated in sustained professional learning on the Response to Intervention process and data disaggregation. These trainings were held throughout the year and were focused on current student data to inform decisions and adjust instruction. Members of the central office further support schools by participating on the school's Better Seeking Teams. The Leadership and Better Seeking teams at the school level lead teachers in reviewing individual student performance data in order to develop individual performance goals for their students and to determine strategies and interventions to promote academic achievement. The review and analysis of data drive each school's improvement plan.

Several evaluation programs are in place to monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success. Formal evaluations, such as the Georgia Teacher Observation Instrument and the Georgia Teacher's Duties and Responsibilities Instrument, are performed on all certified staff members. Additionally, informal district walkthroughs by central office administrators, school administrators, and teachers monitor the implementation of standards established by the district. To provide consistency in the implementation of this evaluation tool, professional learning has centered on deepening understanding of best practices, practicing evaluations in administrative teams, and scoring and evaluation of observations. The district will begin piloting two new evaluation effectiveness systems in fall of 2013. Each administrator and at least two teachers per administrator from each school will participate in the pilot in preparation for full district implementation in the fall of 2014. The Teacher Keys Evaluation System and Leader Keys Evaluation System are standards-based teacher evaluation systems designed to promote the professional growth of teachers and leaders, leading to achievement by all. District administrators will partner and collaborate with the Georgia Department of Education to provide professional learning to school leadership to support evaluation of teachers.

The district utilizes the Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards as a tool to analyze school progress towards fully operational implementation of the standards in the following categories: curriculum, instruction, assessment, planning and organization, student, family and community support, professional learning, leadership, and school culture. The analysis tool provides feedback for schools with targets and direction for continuous school improvement. This two-day process is a collaborative effort between district leaders and Regional Education Service Agency personnel. Every school in the district will have the opportunity to receive feedback from this process.

The district and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress. The district responds to stakeholder expectations and encourages their satisfaction by supporting the many programs that schools provide to their students, teachers and community. Title I schools in the district also hold annual stakeholder meetings. Stakeholders

receive information about the school's available programs to increase student achievement, budget and parental involvement opportunities.

Each school in the district provides a program for parents of students who will be transitioning to a new building level school. Rising kindergarteners, sixth-graders, ninth-graders and their parents are invited to a school orientation to help provide a smooth transition to the next school. Rising ninth-graders and their parents also receive information regarding the high school graduation rule. Meetings are also held for parents of special education students to provide them with pertinent information concerning transportation and the new facilities in which their children will be served.

Other meetings include those provided for parents whose high school students are enrolled in Advanced Placement classes and parents of students transitioning from primary to elementary school. Additionally, parents of students in grades K-2 are invited to participate in a Record of Progress conference to discuss student progress toward mastery of the standards. Each high school provides evening advisement for parents to meet with their child's advisor to determine courses of study for the upcoming year and academic progress. Academic nights are held in elementary and secondary schools to engage parents in learning processes and best practices for supporting their students at home.

Areas in Need of Improvement

District staff members participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both formally and informally to strengthen use of instructional strategies and the instructional framework to ensure achievement of learning expectations for all students. While many areas and grade levels have student work exemplars in place to guide and inform students in regards to their individual progress, our district improvement plan acknowledges the need for a more systematic approach use of student exemplars.

Improving the design and evaluation of structures by which every student and every school is known by at least one adult advocate who is able to support that student's educational experience is an area for improvement for Houston County Schools. Some schools have embedded structures for individualized student support, but these structures are not clearly outlined or defined district wide. Our district leadership group has begun discussing the importance of student advocate programs and will work to develop a more comprehensive and clearly outlined structure to ensure every student has at least one adult advocate in the school building.

Actions to Sustain Strengths

We will continue to utilize the teacher-driven curriculum writing process to guide the implementation of state-adopted content standards. Leaders will continue to monitor instructional practices through both formative and summative evaluation instruments. The district will use our pilot phase of the Teacher Keys Evaluation System and the Leader Keys Evaluation System to deepen our understanding of standards-based teacher evaluation in order to support improvement of instructional practices of teachers and ensure student success. In addition to providing programs to engage parents in their children's education, the district will continue to search out multiple venues to keep parents informed of their children's learning progress.

To support our teachers and administrators in the transition to the Teacher Keys Evaluation System and the Leader Keys Evaluation System, the district will focus sustained professional learning on effective and consistent observation of student instruction and school leadership. The district will also continue to work on feedback processes as related to the instrument for evaluation of the Georgia School Standards.

Plans for Improvement

Professional learning for next year will focus on collaborative examination of student work to adjust instruction, the use of exemplars to guide and inform student self-assessment, and the link between collaboration and improved results in student achievement.

Resources and Support Systems

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

Overall Rating: 2.88

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

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

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	System and school leaders have adopted or created clear expectations for maintaining safety, cleanliness, and a healthy environment, and have shared these definitions and expectations with stakeholders. System and school personnel as well as students are accountable for maintaining these expectations. Measures are in place that allow for continuous tracking of these conditions. Improvement plans are developed and implemented by appropriate personnel as necessary to improve these conditions. Results of improvement efforts are evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments •Example systems for school maintenance requests •Survey results •Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements •Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments •Example maintenance schedules for schools •School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes •Example school records of depreciation of equipment 	Level 3

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

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Houston County Schools

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

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	The system provides a fully functional technology infrastructure, working equipment, and a technical support staff to meet the teaching, learning, and operational needs of stakeholders. System and school personnel develop and implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, infrastructure, and equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model •Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level •District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level •Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness 	Level 2

Accreditation Report

Houston County Schools

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the physical, social, and emotional needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Student assessment system for identifying student needs •Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support •Survey results •Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills •Rubrics on developmentally appropriate benchmarks; e.g. early childhood education •Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education •List of support services available to students 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning •Survey results •Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning •Description of IEP process •District quality assurance procedures that monitor program effectiveness of student support services •Description of referral process 	Level 3

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

Areas of Strength

Houston County School District has a proven record of providing resources and services in all schools that support the district purpose and direction to produce high-achieving students. Our mission and vision drive the decision-making behind each initiative and help inform business practice among all support systems. Having policies, processes, and procedures across all support systems from the district level to the school level ensures consistency in practice and sustainability of resources and services to ensure success for all students.

The Human Resources Department serves as a lead with recruiting, employing, and retaining a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff. The district has strengths in applying defined policies, processes, and procedures that allow for consistent hiring practice and retention of employees. Recruitment is a multi-faceted process for the district. A district-level job fair is held each spring with attendance averaging 600 candidates. Procedures have been developed to ensure equitable hiring practices through the use of the Applitrack system. Principals apply a rubric to applicants in order to equitably choose candidates for interviews in both certified and classified positions. Human Resources, Business and Finance, and Operations jointly work to analyze the number of teachers needed for the upcoming school year and determine faculty allotments. The allotment figures are shared with schools, and principals continue the hiring process in order to adequately fill positions with highly-qualified staff. The district has maintained 100 percent Highly-Qualified status for three consecutive years, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014. When hiring, principals consider teaching positions and certification carefully to ensure that 100 percent Highly-Qualified status is maintained in the district.

Instructional time, material resources and fiscal resources are focused solely on the purpose and direction of the district, its schools, educational programs, and district operations. The district ensures that all students' needs are met and provides additional support for those students considered at-risk with additional funding through supplemental funds. Purchases at the district and school level are justified through district and school level needs assessments and budget narratives.

The Facilities and Maintenance Departments of the district have clear expectations for maintaining safety, cleanliness and a healthy environment. Schools and the district have existing safety and maintenance plans. These plans are evaluated on an on-going basis by district-level directors and the Operations Department. Rotational calendars and procedures are in place to ensure that the maintenance of facilities is completed in a timely manner and on an on-going basis. Plans for the replacement of floors, HVAC systems, and secure vestibules can be viewed and commented on by all stakeholders through the board website and through presentations at the board work sessions and board meetings. Random inspections of facilities take place, as well as health inspections of cafeterias. The district maintains and follows a procedure for equipment depreciation and evaluation of existing equipment. A plan for handling and disposing of chemicals also exists. Stakeholders have an opportunity to comment on their safety through the annual Title I Parent Survey, Title II Parent and Student Surveys, and the Safe and Drug Free Survey for secondary students. Survey data are collected and utilized in conducting a needs assessment of the district and in revisions of the strategic plan. The district also conducts regular emergency drills for fire and code yellow or code red. These drills are documented monthly. All schools are staffed with med techs that help serve those students identified as medically fragile.

The district has had no state audit findings for ten consecutive years. The district demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the district. A district risk assessment is maintained and updated on an on-going basis. Procedures for business and finance funds have been developed. This information is shared annually with administrative staff and bookkeepers through financial training. A long-range technology plan and a facilities plan have been developed and posted for feedback by stakeholders on the county website. The strategic plan, including the strategic goal for Organizational Effectiveness, is updated and reviewed on an on-going basis.

On-going professional development regarding the Response to Intervention process continues to help strengthen the effectiveness of support systems in meeting the academic and behavioral needs of the student population. Professional learning continues as well in the use of GACollege411 and TieNet, a platform for gathering data and tracking individual student growth. Perception data are gathered from

multiple sources--administration, certified staff, classified staff, students, and parents--and is used in evaluating the effectiveness of varying programs. This data are used in adjusting program management and procedures to ensure maximized use of time and resources. Additional data from external and internal audits, monitoring visits, and program evaluations are used in adjusting program effectiveness.

Areas of Needs Improvement

The district has made great strides in the provision, coordination, and evaluation of the effectiveness of information resources and development of a technology infrastructure. With the 2012-2013 ESPLOST initiatives, plans are in place to increase information resources and to provide increased professional learning to build capacity of personnel in the area of technology integration in the classroom. School media centers employ one media specialist. With multiple classrooms and courses needing access to information and needing support in integration of technology, each media specialist must allocate time according to priority and greatest need. Technology plans have been developed and revised based upon a district needs assessment. A roll-out plan for new technology has been developed, but a challenge has been to meet the needs of all schools with limited technology staffing.

Actions to Sustain Strength

In order for the areas of resources and support systems to continue to make gains, evaluation of existing processes, policies, and procedures will continue to take place on an on-going basis. With evaluating and monitoring processes in place we can ensure that we maintain our mission-minded approach to all areas of instruction, including providing material and fiscal resources. As part of the evaluation and monitoring process, stakeholder involvement in decision making will need to continue to be strengthened. Multiple plans are presented to stakeholders for feedback and are posted on the district website. The ease of accessing such information and providing authentic feedback will be expanded. With the addition of the Applitrack system and Infinite Campus software in 2012-2013, the capabilities of obtaining accurate numbers of applicants and student class counts helps Houston County maintain the ability to adequately allocate personnel as needed. In addition increased communication between the Federal Programs department and Human Resources department ensures comparability across both title and non-title schools when allotting personnel.

Plans for Improvement

The technology committee, comprised of representation from all departments and school leadership, meets to coordinate placement of new technology and to also coordinate professional learning. Policies are consistently revised based on the long-range technology roll-out plan. In 2012-2013, Curriculum Integration Specialists were hired to give the district and schools on-site support for the purpose of effectively integrating technology into classrooms. In addition, technology specialists are available among all schools with an additional on-call technology specialist. The district began a Bring Your Own Device pilot program in 2013. By implementing clear procedures for the purchase of software, technology, and applications, the technology department is able to ascertain whether the infrastructure is capable of handling new platforms and programs. This also allows instructional staff to view the software in question to ensure alignment with curriculum is evident.

Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Overall Rating: 2.6

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

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	Systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning from multiple data sources are documented and used consistently by professional and support staff throughout the district. Data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. System and school personnel use data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning •Survey results •Written protocols and procedures for data collection and analysis •Examples of changes to the district strategic plan based on data results •Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning •List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning 	Level 3

Accreditation Report

Houston County Schools

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

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	Policies and procedures describe a process for analyzing data that determine verifiable improvement in student learning including readiness for and success at the next level. Results indicate improvement, and system and school personnel systematically use these results to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement action plans related to student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data •Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning •Evidence of student readiness for the next level •Evidence of student growth •Evidence of student success at the next level 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	System and school leaders monitor comprehensive information about student learning, system and school effectiveness, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals. Leaders regularly communicate results using multiple delivery methods and to all stakeholder groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals •Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals •Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement •Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups 	Level 3

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

Areas of Strength

The Houston County School District is conscientious in collecting data as a measure of student achievement. Data are used to develop school and district improvement plans, enhance instruction and professional learning, and to evaluate program effectiveness. The district continually analyzes data obtained from many different sources. Data received from state assessments are posted on SharePoint, an intranet portal. The results are further analyzed using tools such as Microsoft pivot tables, charts, and graphs. The data files are broken down by demographics to include student subpopulations. Data files are imported into the student information system for individual, school, and district level analysis. Specific reports created in the student information system have been designed to provide further analysis of the data. The Student Longitudinal Data System is also used for district, school, and teacher level analysis. The district and each school have a student performance data notebook posted on SharePoint. Current and archived data are available. Results are posted and disaggregated in chart format and include similar districts and schools, as well as other trend data.

The district engages in a continuous process to determine strengths and weaknesses in student learning throughout the district. The Teaching and Learning Department establishes school improvement processes and monitors schools to determine if data are effectively used to improve instruction for student learning, as well as measures the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools. Protocols for the use of student data and reporting formats that drive student learning and school improvement are provided by the Testing Department and the Teaching and Learning Department. School support documents for school improvement planning, report generation, and the continuous improvement process are found on SharePoint. Data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. These data are used to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement plans.

The district monitors and communicates comprehensive information related to student performance, system/school performance, and improvement goals to stakeholders. Results are shared with schools, teachers, parents, board members, and the community. Board members receive information in board reports and at board retreats. The community is further notified by call outs to parents, a local school district TV channel, parent letters, Facebook, and posting on school billboards.

Leadership monitors comprehensive information about student learning through informal walkthroughs, which are conducted throughout the school year. Administrators observe teaching in the classroom to evaluate the learning environment and provide feedback to teachers to help improve instructional practices.

Areas in Need of Improvement

While most core subject area teachers within a given school utilize common assessments, the local assessment measures utilized by the district are not always consistent, reliable, or bias-free across the county for all classrooms, particularly for non-instructional divisions, where common assessments may not even exist. In light of the implementation of CCGPS, the district will ensure that common assessments are consistently utilized for all subject areas and from school to school.

The district should regularly and systematically assess the use of data, expand data analysis training for professional staff and offer support staff training in how to evaluate, interpret, and use data. Policies and procedures specific to data training and the analysis of data that determine improvement in student performance should be implemented.

Actions to Sustain Strength

The district will continue to collect and analyze data from multiple sources and to make this data available on the system-wide intranet portal. District and school improvement plans will continue to be monitored utilizing these multiple sources of data for effectiveness. The district will not only continue to utilize existing data sources, but the school improvement plans will include the collection of new data from various sources as well.

Quality assurance is critical. Therefore, the district will continue to engage in a continuous process to determine improvement in student learning by systematically using student results to design, implement, and evaluate improvement plans related to student learning, as well as, monitor and communicate district results through the use of multiple delivery systems.

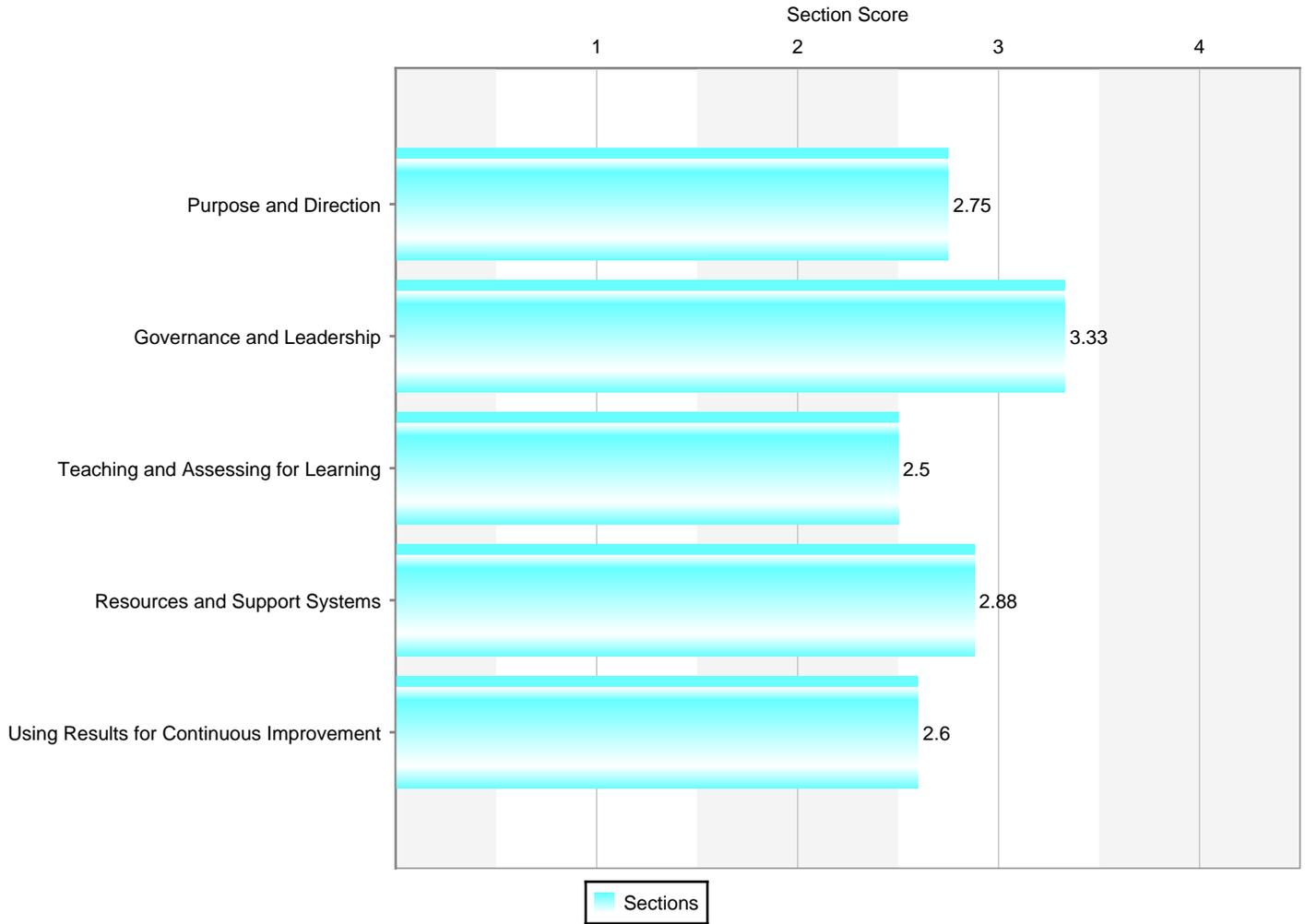
Plans for Improvement

The District Action Team has taken a proactive approach to address areas that are in need of improvement, based on the AdvancEd standards. All indicators, which received a score of 2 or lower, have been included as an action step in the district strategic plan. In light of CCGPS implementation, the HCBE district plan includes a goal that acknowledges the need for the district to ensure mastery of the standards, and also a goal to guarantee student success. These goals specifically emphasize the importance of developing and maintaining collaborative learning communities, within which a comprehensive and balanced system of assessments may be created, evaluated, and adjusted. The district is currently working to ensure that mastery of standards and student success will be evaluated the same from school-to-school and from teacher-to-teacher across the district. This work is currently ongoing through summer curriculum writing and assessment creation, as well as through professional learning to create and maintain collaborative learning communities. The district recognizes the need for such assessments for non-instructional divisions as well. The implementation of Student Learning Objectives will address the need for common assessments for all subjects. This will ensure that the district assessments are consistent, reliable, and bias-free and that these assessments are utilized for all subject areas and in all schools. The district plan, with state, local assessments, and SLOs, will establish a more methodical approach that will guarantee consistency of assessment policies, procedures, and outcomes across the entire district.

The district plan also addresses the need for sustained professional learning for administrators and teachers. This plan focuses on supporting beginning teachers. Additionally, the plan includes the need to revise handbooks and policy manuals, and will include the evaluation of professional learning relative to all employees' use of data.

Report Summary

Scores By Section



Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

Introduction

The Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic is designed to analyze the institution's survey results in terms of areas of achievement and areas that need improvement. Further, the diagnostic is essential to the accreditation and continuous improvement processes in that it provides the institution with a comprehensive view of the aggregate scores of the surveys administered, and the actual total of respondents for each survey type to derive a single score for this diagnostic. The performance level score computed at the completion of the diagnostic is used to broaden and enhance the external review team's understanding of the stakeholder's perceptions of the institution; the diagnostic should be used in the same manner by the institution as it engages in improvement planning.

Stakeholder Feedback Data

Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
Did you complete the Stakeholder Feedback Data document offline and upload below?	Yes	See Attachment	Stakeholder Feedback Data Document

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.5

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
1.	Questionnaire Administration	All required AdvancED questionnaires were used by the institution to receive stakeholder feedback. The minimum response rate for each population was met (parent questionnaire: equal to or greater than 20%, student questionnaire(s): equal to or greater than 40%, staff questionnaire: equal to or greater than 60%). Questionnaires were administered with complete fidelity to the appropriate administrative procedures. In every instance, the stakeholders to whom these questionnaires were administered fully represented the populations served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations were provided as necessary for all participants.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
2.	Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	All questionnaires had an average item value of 3.20 or above (on a 5.0 scale). Results of stakeholder feedback collected by the institution were acceptably analyzed and presented with reasonable clarity.	Level 3

Areas of Notable Achievement

Which area(s) indicate the overall highest level of satisfaction or approval?

In responding to the staff survey, 97 percent of staff members agree that their school's purpose statement is clearly focused on student success. Additionally, 97 percent of staff members feel that their school's staff members are qualified to support student learning. Also, 94 percent of staff members indicate notable satisfaction or approval in several areas. These areas are listed below.

- Schools use multiple assessment measures to determine student learning and school performance.
- School leaders monitor data related to student achievement.
- The schools' purpose statements are supported by the policies and practices adopted by the school board or governing body.
- All staff members participate in continuous professional learning based on identified needs of the school.
- Schools maintain facilities that support learning.
- Schools have a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions, and measures for student growth.
- School leaders expect staff members to hold all students to high academic standards.

Early elementary students report that 98 percent feel that their teacher wants them to learn. Likewise, 98 percent of early elementary students indicate their school has books for them to read and that their teacher wants them to do their best.

Elementary student surveys indicate 98 percent of students agree that their teachers want them to do their best work. Additionally, 97 percent indicate that their teachers and principal want every student to learn. A total of 97 percent indicate that they feel their principal and teachers help them to be ready for the next grade.

In responding to the middle school student survey, 87 percent of the students indicate that their principals and teachers have high expectations for them. Students also report at an 83 percent satisfaction rating that their school gives multiple assessments to check students' understanding of what is taught.

At the high school level 77 percent of the students indicate that programs and services are available to help them succeed. In addition, 77 percent of the students believe that they are offered a high quality education.

In responding to the Parent Survey, 90 percent of parents indicate that their child knows the expectations for learning in all classes. Additionally, 90 percent of parents indicate that the school provides a safe learning environment. Parents also report at a 90 percent satisfaction rate that the schools ensure the facilities support learning and the schools' purpose statements are clearly focused on student success.

Which area(s) show a trend toward increasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval?

The spring 2013 AdvancED Stakeholder Survey was the first and only administration of this survey. Therefore, we cannot accurately determine any trends at this time from AdvancED data. In-house stakeholder surveys have been completed in the past. They have been used for strategic planning and determining equity needs at the district level.

Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other stakeholder feedback sources?

Based on results from the Safe and Drug Free Schools' Survey, 90 percent of middle school students and 84 percent of high school students indicate that their school has high standards for achievement.

This data is consistent with the SACS Stakeholder Feedback Survey which indicates that 87 percent of middle school students and 75 percent of high school students responded that their teacher and administrators have high expectations for them.

The Title I Parent Survey indicates that 95 percent of parents feel that the school has high expectations for students. This data are consistent with the SACS Parent Feedback Survey indicating that 89 percent of parents feel the school has high expectations for students in all classes.

Areas in Need of Improvement

Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest level of satisfaction or approval?

The staff's overall lowest level of satisfaction or approval is in the area of peer coaching. Only 76 percent of staff members feel that school members provide peer coaching to teachers. Additionally, 81 percent feel that a formal process is in place to support new staff members in their professional practice. Only 82 percent of staff members agree that all staff members are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.

Of early elementary students, 70 percent of students indicate that their family likes to come to school. Only 78 percent of students mark that other teachers know them. Only 58 percent of elementary students respond that the principal and teacher ask what they think. Also, 64 percent of elementary students respond that students treat adults with respect. Likewise, 70 percent of elementary students agree that the school ask parents to come to school.

At the middle school level, 32 percent of the students feel that students help each other in their school if they are not friends. Additionally, 28 percent of the middle school students agree that students respect the property of others in their school.

At the high school level only 29 percent of the students indicate that students respect the property of others. Also, 35 percent of the high school students believe that students help each other.

The parents' survey data indicates 11 percent of parents disagree or strongly disagree that their child's teachers inform them regularly of how their child is being graded. Additionally, 10 percent disagree or strongly disagree that their child's teachers meet his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction.

Which area(s) show a trend toward decreasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval?

The spring 2013 AdvancED Stakeholder Survey was the first and only administration of this survey. Therefore, we cannot accurately determine any trends at this time from AdvancED data. In-house stakeholder surveys have been completed in the past. They have been used for strategic planning and determining equity needs at the district level.

What are the implications for these stakeholder perceptions?

Staff stakeholder perceptions imply that we need to consider additional ways to support new teachers in their professional practice. Staff perceptions also imply a need for school members to provide peer coaching to teachers.

Student stakeholder perceptions at the early elementary level imply a need for schools to communicate that parents are welcome at the school. At the middle and high school level, student stakeholder perceptions indicate a need for more students to help one another and to respect the property of others.

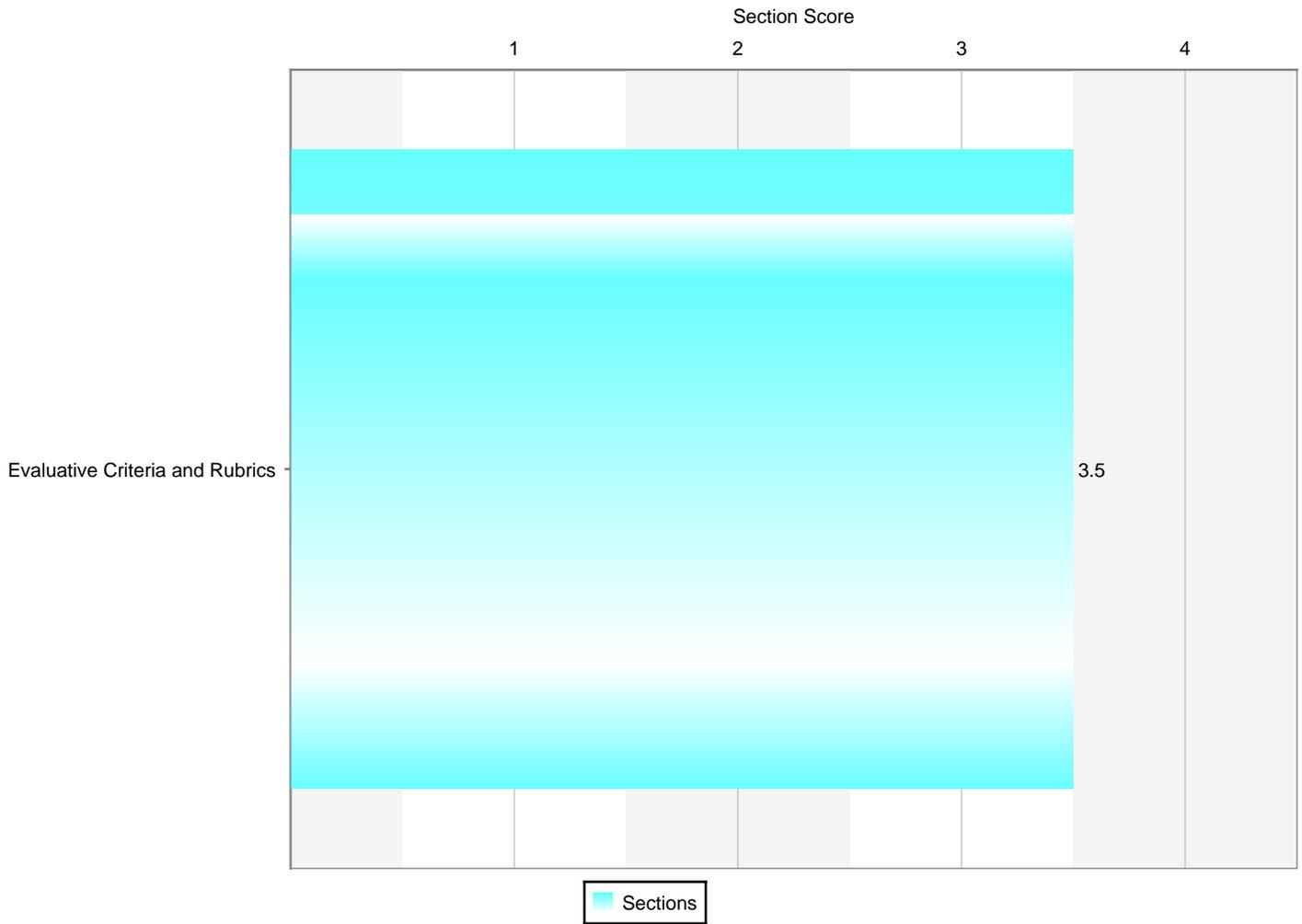
Parent stakeholder perceptions indicate a need for teachers to individualize student instruction and to keep parents informed of student progress and grading.

Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other stakeholder feedback sources?

The spring 2013 AdvancED Stakeholder Survey was the first and only administration of this survey. Therefore, we cannot accurately determine any trends at this time from AdvancED data. In-house stakeholder surveys have been completed in the past. They have been used for strategic planning and determining equity needs at the district level.

Report Summary

Scores By Section



Student Performance Diagnostic

Introduction

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

Student Performance Data

Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
Did you complete the Student Performance Data document offline and upload below?	Yes	See attachment.	Student Performance Data Document

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.5

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
1.	Assessment Quality	The array of assessment devices used by the institution to determine students' performances is sufficiently aligned so that valid inferences can be reached regarding students' status with respect to the entire set of curricular aims regarded as high-priority, "must accomplish," instructional targets. The documentation provided in support of this alignment is persuasive. All of the assessments used are accompanied by evidence demonstrating that they satisfy accepted technical requirements such as validity, reliability, absence of bias, and instructional sensitivity.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
2.	Test Administration	All the assessments used by the institution to determine students' performances, whether externally acquired or internally developed, have been administered with complete fidelity to the administrative procedures appropriate for each assessment. In every instance, the students to whom these assessments were administered are accurately representative of the students served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations have been provided for all assessments so that valid inferences can be made about all students' status with respect to all of the institution's targeted curricular outcomes.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
3.	Quality of Learning	Evidence of student learning promoted by the institution is acceptably analyzed and presented with reasonable clarity. In comparison to institutions functioning in a similar educational context, students' status, improvement, and/or growth evidence indicates that the level of student learning is at or above what would otherwise be expected.	Level 3

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
4.	Equity of Learning	Evidence of student learning indicates achievement gaps exist among subpopulations of students, and these achievement gaps have noticeably declined.	Level 3

Areas of Notable Achievement

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

The new accountability measure for the state of Georgia, the College and Career Readiness Performance Index, CCRPI, was first published in 2012. The 2012 CCRPI results demonstrate system level achievement as indicated on 2011-2012 state standardized assessments. Published CCRPI results for the 2012-2013 school year will be released in December 2013.

Houston County's 2012 CCRPI overall scores for all school levels are greater than the state's average CCRPI scores. The Houston County School District has achievement scores which are above the state's achievement scores for all school levels. Additionally, the progress points and gap points are higher than the state average for both elementary and middle schools, as are the Exceeding the Bar challenge points.

Initial results for 2013 indicate that the strongest areas of achievement are in the areas of eighth grade reading with 98.08 percent of students meeting or exceeding on the Criterion Referenced Competency Test, CRCT. Fifth grade English language arts scores were at 97.39 percent meets and exceeds and fifth grade mathematics students scored at 94.76 percent meets and exceeds. Fifth grade writing assessment scores exceed the state with a score of 91 percent meeting or exceeding, compared to 78 percent statewide.

On 2013 End-of-Course Tests, the system outperformed the state average in every tested area. Areas of notable achievement include American literature with 91 percent meeting state standards. Also noted is 86 percent in 9th grade literature and 80 percent in economics. On the Georgia High School Writing Test, 95 percent of 11th graders met or exceeded standards.

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

At the elementary school level, several content areas show a positive trend in performance from 2011 - 2013. Third Grade CRCT scores show an increase of one percent in reading. Fourth Grade CRCT scores show an increase of four percent in reading and mathematics, seven percent in science and eight percent in social studies. While Third Grade and Fourth Grade CRCT scores show a positive increase in various content areas, it is important to note that Fifth Grade CRCT scores show a positive trend in performance in all content areas. In fifth grade, English Language Arts CRCT scores show an increase of one percent. Reading and Mathematics CRCT scores show an increase of two percent. Science CRCT scores show an increase of four percent, and Social Studies CRCT scores show an increase of one percent.

At the middle school level, several content areas show a positive trend in performance from 2011 - 2013. Sixth Grade CRCT scores show an increase of five percent in mathematics and one percent in social studies. Seventh Grade CRCT scores show an increase of five percent in reading and social studies, two percent in English language arts, three percent in science, and one percent in mathematics. Eighth Grade CRCT scores show an increase of one percent in reading, two percent in mathematics, and seven percent in social studies.

At the high school level, a number of exams show a positive trend in performance from 2011-2013. The Biology End-of-Course Test, EOCT, shows a five percent increase. The Physical Science EOCT shows an eight percent increase. The US History EOCT shows a gain of seven percent.

Which area(s) indicate the overall highest performance?

Houston County's system scores are higher than state scores in all subject areas and grade levels in 2013. However, there are some areas that are higher than others. Houston County's highest overall performance areas assessed on the CRCT are reading and English language arts in all grade levels, third through eighth. Reading scores in 2013 for third through eighth grade are 94 percent, 95 percent, 96 percent, 97 percent, 97 percent, and 98 percent, respectively. English language arts scores in 2013 for grades three through eight are 90 percent, 93 percent, 97 percent, 93 percent, 95 percent, and 95 percent, respectively. Houston County's overall highest performance areas assessed on the EOCT are ninth grade literature and American literature. Ninth grade literature and American literature scores in 2013 are 86 percent and 91 percent, respectively.

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

English learners, EL, in third, fourth and fifth grades demonstrate a steady increase in performance in all academic areas with the exception of third grade EL mathematics students. Black students in fourth and fifth grades also show a steady increase in performance in all academic areas with the only exception being fourth grade English language arts. Although still performing well below the mean in science and social studies, fourth and fifth grade students with disabilities, SWD, demonstrate a positive trend toward an increase in performance in all academic areas.

English learners in the middle grades also demonstrate an increase in performance in sixth and seventh grade mathematics, science and social studies. SWD students in the seventh grade exhibit an increase in performance in all academic areas. While there is a similar increase in performance in middle grades, SWD students in the seventh grade continue to perform well below the mean of all students.

In high school, SWD students show an increase in performance on the Mathematics II, Biology, Physical Science and US history EOCT's. Moreover, black high school students show an increase in performance in Mathematics II, Ninth Grade Literature, Physical Science and US History EOCT's.

Between which subgroups is the achievement gap closing?

The most noteworthy gap closure in the elementary and middle grades can be observed among the English learners in all of third through seventh grades. This subgroup demonstrates significant growth over the last three years ranging from an increase of six percentage points in fourth grade mathematics to twenty-three percentage points in fourth grade English and from eleven points in seventh grade mathematics to thirty-seven points in seventh grade reading. Remarkably, this growth results in EL students outperforming the system mean in third grade reading and English as well as fourth grade English language arts.

The achievement gap in the black subgroup also continues to steadily close in the elementary and middle grades. The most significant gains in the black subgroup can be found in fourth grade science and social studies, where there is a 14 and 15 percentage point increase in scores respectively, leading to a seven point closure in both areas over the past three years. The black subgroup's achievement gap is closing for fifth grade English and seventh grade mathematics to within one percentage point of the overall mean of all students.

Results indicate that high school SWD students are improving on the Physical Science and Biology EOCTs, with gap closures of five points on each assessment.

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

Strong reading scores for elementary students are confirmed by the Houston County Literacy Inventory, HCLI. The HCLI is based on the Fountas and Pinnel Reading Levels and records an independent and instructional reading level for each student in grades K-5. When compared to similar systems of the same size and like demographics, Houston County falls on the midline, outperforming several districts for grades 3-8 in all subject areas on the CRCT.

Houston County AP exams outperformed the state, national, and global average for 2012-2013. Of the 1,250 exams given in Spring 2013, 67 percent were at or above a performance level of 3.

Areas in Need of Improvement

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

Although demonstrating an ability to meet subgroup performance targets on the 2012 CCRPI, students with disabilities, English learners, and black students fail to meet state target levels. Black students fall below the state target level for the subjects of reading, English language arts, mathematics, and science. English Learners fall below the state target level for the subjects of reading, English language arts, and science. Even though students with disabilities do meet the subgroup target, they do not meet the state target in any subject area.

Official CCRPI data for the 2012-2013 standardized tests will not be released until December 2013. Initial results show that the greatest areas of weakness include Coordinate Algebra EOCT, Third Grade Mathematics CRCT, and Sixth Grade Science CRCT. Although exceeding the state average for SWD students, students with disabilities and English learners still do not meet standards on writing assessments. In 2013, only 53 percent of students with disabilities and 55 percent of English learners meet or exceed standards on the eighth grade writing assessment.

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

Systemwide, there are four areas that show negative trends in performance from 2011-2013. Three of the four are found within Third Grade CRCT. A decline in the percentage of students passing English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science CRCT's in third grade is observed. The fourth negative trend can be found at the high school level, on the Mathematics I EOCT. It is important to note that the decline in performance for all four of these assessments is reflective of statewide performance, where similar decreases can also be observed. The performance on the Mathematics I exam was not altogether unexpected. True 9th grade students would have taken the CCGPS Coordinate Algebra course, and therefore the only students taking the Mathematics I EOCT were all taking the course for at least the second time.

Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest performance?

Although Houston County's system scores are higher than state scores in all subject areas and grade levels in 2013, there are areas that are in need of improvement. Houston County's overall lowest areas of performance tend to be science and social studies for grades four through eight. Science scores in 2013 for grades five, six, and eight indicate the lowest scoring content area. Although showing some improvement from the 2012, social studies scores in 2013 for grades four, five, and seven are still the overall lowest performance. The lowest performance area on the CRCT for third grade is in the area of mathematics at 84 percent in 2013. Houston County's lowest overall performance areas assessed on the EOCT were Mathematics I and Mathematics II. Mathematics I and Mathematics II scores in 2013 were 20 percent and 72 percent, respectively. The 20 percent pass rate in Mathematics I is reflective of a curriculum change in FY 13. Students who took the Mathematics I EOCT were all students who had previously failed Mathematics I and therefore who are at least one year behind their same-age cohort.

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

The students with disabilities subgroup data reveal a trend of decreasing performance in the third grade in all academic areas over the last three years. The largest decrease is in third grade mathematics. This same decrease is mirrored statewide. Eighth grade EL students have demonstrated a decrease in performance in science from 42 percent of students meeting or exceeding standards in 2011 to 36 percent meeting or exceeding standards in 2013. Similarly, eighth grade EL students' performance reveals a decrease in social studies from 43 percent in 2012 to 41 percent in 2013. The decreasing trend is also evident among high school EL students on the English, Physical Science and US History EOCTs.

Between which subgroups is the achievement gap becoming greater?

One area of significant concern is in the elementary schools, where third grade SWD students exhibit an increase in achievement gaps as well as a decline in student performance. The third grade reading gap reveals a gap increase of seven percentage points while English reveals a gap increase of six percentage points. Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies CRCT gaps have risen by ten, two and three percentage points, respectively.

In the middle schools, the achievement gap for eighth grade SWD students in mathematics and science is slightly increasing as well. Eighth grade mathematics data shows a gap increase of two percentage points, while eighth grade science data shows a gap increase of four percentage points.

Another significant concern is the increase in the achievement gap for eighth grade EL students in English, science, and social studies, where the gap has increased by four percentage points in English, by 11 percentage points in science, and by one percentage point in social studies. These findings are not consistent with the performance trend of EL students in all other elementary and middle grade levels.

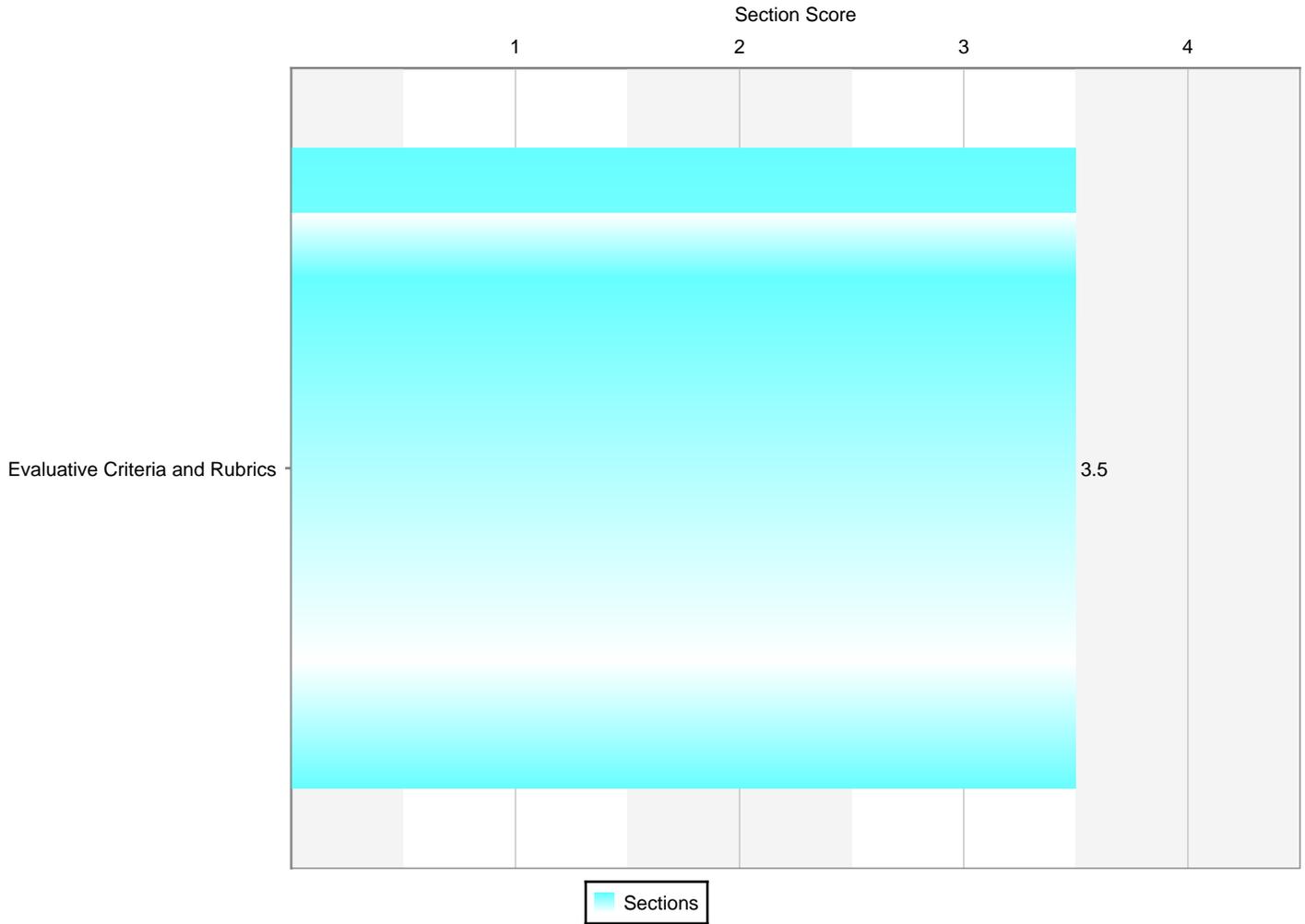
EL data in high school exhibits a decline in student performance on the End-of-Course Tests in 2013, even though all students reveal increased performance on the same tests. Consequently, the achievement gaps in ninth grade literature, American literature, physical Science, US history and economics for EL students result in gap increases. The most significant EL gap increase is shown in 2013, evidenced by a 29 percentage point gap increase from the previous year. It is important to note that EL population size is very small when compared to the overall tested population, which can account for some of the dramatic fluctuation gap size from one year to the next.

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

Evidence of lower mathematics performance similar to the Mathematics End of Course Tests can also be seen in 2012-2013 Scholastic Aptitude Test, SAT, Results. System SAT scores indicate a six point decline on the mathematics section. Similarly, consistent with a decline in student performance for EL students, ACCESS scores in 2012-2013 also show decreases relative to CRCT and EOCT declines.

Report Summary

Scores By Section



AdvancED Assurances

Introduction

AdvancED Policies and Procedures outline certain requirements that all institutions must meet in order to be in compliance. Institutions are required to verify whether or not they meet these requirements by answering a series of questions and in some cases, attaching evidence for review.

By responding to the questions in ASSIST and attaching evidence when required, the institution has verified whether it meets or does not meet each of the Assurances for Accreditation.

AdvancED Assurances

Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
The institution has read, understands, and complies with the AdvancED Policies and Procedures.	Yes, we certify the above assurance.		

Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
The institution has reported all substantive changes in the institution that affect the scope and/or have an impact on the institution's ability to meet the AdvancED standards and policies. Such changes include, but are not limited to: - Restructuring (merging, opening, or closing) of the institution or institution(s) within its jurisdiction - Mission and purpose of the institution - Governance structure of the institution, including changing to a charter school/school system, being the subject of a state takeover, or a change in ownership - Grade levels served by the institution - Staffing, including administrative and other non-teaching professionals personnel - Available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance - Level of funding - School day or school year - Establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus - Student population that causes program or staffing modification(s) - Available programs, including fine arts, practical arts and student activities	Yes, we certify the above assurance.		

Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
The institution implements a written security and crisis management plan which includes emergency evacuation procedures and appropriate training for stakeholders. Attach the security and crisis management plan. (optional)	Yes, we certify the above assurance.		

Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
The institution monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system.	Yes, we certify the above assurance.		

Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
The institution engages in a continuous improvement process and implements an improvement plan. Attach the improvement plan if the plan is not located in AdvancED's Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST).	Yes, we certify the above assurance.	See attachment.	System Strategic Plan - HCSS

Accreditation ReportHouston County Schools

Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
The system verifies that all institutions within its jurisdiction meet the AdvancED Standards for Schools. Attach a description of the quality assurance process used to monitor the institutions.	Yes, we certify the above assurance.	See attachment.	Quality Assurance Document