

**Report of the  
Quality Assurance Review Team  
for  
Onslow County Schools**

200 Broadhurst Road  
P O Box 99  
Jacksonville, North Carolina 28541-0099  
US

**Kathy T Spencer, Superintendent**  
**Mrs. Margaret E. Brown, Chair, Onslow County Board of Education**  
**Billy Floyd, Chair, Quality Assurance Review Team**

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**Review Dates: 02/21/2010 - 02/24/2010**



*North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.*

# Quality Assurance Review Report

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## About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

**Background.** Founded in 1895, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and Schools (SACS CASI) accredit public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, Latin America, and the Department of Defense Schools worldwide.

In 2006, NCA CASI, SACS CASI, and the research and development arm of the accrediting associations, the National Study of School Evaluation, unified to form AdvancED. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 23,000 schools in 65 countries, serving 15 million students.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI and SACS CASI have defined shared, research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help schools, school districts, and educational service agencies continuously improve.

**The Accreditation Process.** To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, school districts and their schools must:

**1) Meet the AdvancED Standards and Policies for Quality School Systems.** School districts demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards and policies which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

**2) Engage in continuous improvement.** School districts and their schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose that the school district is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school and district effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).

**3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** School districts and schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, school districts host an external quality assurance review team once every five years. The team evaluates the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the school district improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school district and a written report detailing the team's required actions. The school district acts on the team's required actions and submits a progress report two years following the review.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI accreditation engages the entire school district community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help school districts and their schools maximize student success and improve organizational effectiveness

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# Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

**Purpose.** The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

1. Evaluate the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards and policies..
2. Assess the efficacy of the district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions to improve the district and its schools.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation for review by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

A key aim of the Quality Assurance Review is to verify that the school district is operating with institutional integrity - that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students.

**School District Preparation.** To prepare for the Quality Assurance Review, the school district and the community complete the AdvancED Standards Assessment Report. The report engages the district in an in-depth self assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. The school district identifies and describes the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each standard. Through this internal review, the school district examines how its systems and processes contribute to student performance and school district effectiveness.

**Summary of Team Activities.** The Quality Assurance Review Team is led by an AdvancED certified team chair and comprised of professionals from outside the school district. The team reviews the findings of the school district's internal self-assessment, conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders, reviews student performance data and other documentation provided by the school district, and observes practices and daily operations. The team engages in professional deliberations to reach consensus on the school district's adherence to the standards for accreditation. The team provides an oral exit report and prepares a written Quality Assurance Review Team Report designed to help the school district and its schools improve.

**The Quality Assurance Review Team Report.** Following the visit, the review team completes the Quality Assurance Review report. After review by a nationally-trained reader, the report is submitted to the district. The report contains commendations and required actions for improvement.

**Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions.** The school district uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school district is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The AdvancED State Office is available to assist the school district in addressing the required actions. Following the Quality Assurance Review Team visit, the school district must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress it has made on the team's required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school district is addressing the required actions.

**Accreditation Recommendation.** The Quality Assurance Review team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed at the state level and by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school district following action from the commission.

# Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the SACS CASI North Carolina State Office (SACS-CASI-NC), a division of AdvancED, visited Onslow County Schools on 02/21/2010 - 02/24/2010.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 65 administrators, 186 teachers, 37 support staff, 156 parents and business partners, 132 students, and 4 Board of Education members for a total of 580 stakeholders. In addition to meeting with district personnel and stakeholders, the team visited 9 schools within the school district. During the school visits, team members interviewed school stakeholders, observed classrooms, and reviewed relevant school artifacts. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the district. Specifically, the team examined the district's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED standards focus on systems with a school district and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of the standards lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards. The Quality Assurance Review Team used the AdvancED standards to guide its review of the school district, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school district and its schools function as a whole and embody the practices and characteristics of a quality school district.

Through its examination of the school district's adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review Team prepared reports on each standard, highlighting strengths and suggestions for improvement specific to each standard. These reports can be found following this summary.

The Quality Assurance Review Team also examined the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance. The team reviewed the district's practices and methods to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results. The team's findings in this area can be found following the standard reports.

The team used the standard reports and quality assurance findings to identify common themes, significant accomplishments, and pressing needs facing the district. These became the basis for the overall commendations and required actions that are provided below. The commendations and required actions should serve as the focus for the district as it acts on the team's findings. They represent the areas that the team believes will have the greatest impact in helping the district further its improvement efforts. The standard reports and quality assurance findings can be used to help reinforce and enrich the district's understanding of the commendations and required actions.

## Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the Onslow County Schools for the following strengths and accomplishments. While additional strengths are noted in the detailed review of each standard that appears later in this report, the commendations listed below are the strengths that the team believes are most deserving of being highlighted.

- **The provision of high quality leadership development was noted at the district and school levels.**

Professional development is provided to build leadership capacity across the school system beginning with the Board of Education. School board members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities as a result of National School Board Association training, district workshops and through Webinars and meetings with the superintendent. A strong mentoring program has been established for school board members, new building principals and assistant principals.

Growth of an organization and continued improvement is a direct result of the quality of leadership provided.

- **The promotion of an educational culture that emphasizes commitment to excellence is infused throughout all levels and departments.**

The promotion of an educational culture that emphasizes a commitment to excellence is infused throughout all levels and departments. The use of laptops/smart phones for Algebra I students leading to 98% proficiency on state tests is a good example of excellence noted in the vision. The goal of preparing students to enter a competitive workforce to compete at a global level is evidenced by the partnerships they have initiated with Mexico, China, and Denmark.

Data obtained from interviews indicated the superintendent is highly visible in the school community and is passionate in her communication of the vision, mission and goals. Her “visionary” leadership encourages others to commit to the vision and goals of the district. Staff members interviewed commented that there is a “focus towards a common vision” and an expectation of excellence in all areas.

Onslow County school system had their initial district accreditation five-year visit in April of 2005. During this visit, the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team gave the school system eight recommendations to help improve the quality of the learning experience provided to all students. Through interviews with administrators, teachers, and staff, the school system has been working on the implementation of these recommendations for the last five years. Documentation provided further evidence that all of the recommendations had been implemented.

The provision of an educational culture that emphasizes commitment to excellence ensures that the district fulfills its core business by designing engaging, challenging, and satisfying work for every student, every day.

- **School and district leaders promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership by giving stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process.**

The Quality Council is a noteworthy vehicle for establishing a culture that encourages participation, builds a sense of ownership, and provides parents and stakeholders with a true voice in the planning and direction of the school district. One former member noted how good it felt to serve on this committee and know that his

voice was heard. Community members are also involved at the local level by assisting schools to develop their School Improvement Plans. Throughout the interview process, stakeholders at all levels of the organization communicated the connectedness and inclusivity created by district leadership.

Strong relationships help build the foundation upon which current and future successes will stand. Moving larger districts forward is quite challenging; however, this district has utilized its stakeholders to make their goals possible.

- **The administration, faculty, and staff working in the Onslow County School System (OCS) are committed, dedicated, and focused on meeting the needs of all students.**

Stakeholder interviews and classroom observations reveal teachers and staff who are well trained and who provide instruction that is research based and reflective of best practice. All stakeholder groups stated that “people” were the number one strength of the OCS. Parent responses also indicate teachers go above and beyond to assist students and families, including after school tutoring, home visits, and excellent communication with parents concerning student performance.

This focus has contributed to the ability of the district to close the achievement gap and make gains in student achievement.

- **The development of strong collaborative partnerships with various community agencies and businesses helps students learn and enhance improvement efforts.**

The school system and community have established Businesses Assisting Schools and Educating Students (BASES). Through the BASES program, Onslow County Schools documented approximately 1.3 million dollars in services, goods, and financial support during the 2008-09 school year. Additionally, the system has recorded and received over 37,500 hours of support from volunteers interacting directly with school programs and students. School personnel reported more than six million dollars has been contributed to the school system since the inception of the program.

This powerful collaboration provides the district with many opportunities to leverage resources and engage the community as a whole.

- **The vision, mission, and goals of the Onslow County School System are clearly communicated and supported throughout the school district, schools, and community.**

The vision and beliefs are visible throughout the district and all stakeholder groups articulated a clear understanding of and expressed support for a shared vision and purpose. The school actively reinforces the mission and vision through a variety of publications and focuses on building understanding in the community through teacher planning meetings, parent gatherings, online resources, and school activities.

Belief statements and a shared vision provide the focus and support necessary for system-wide high student achievement and development of well rounded students.

- **The utilization of diverse modes of communication provides stakeholders access to information about student performance, district and school activities, and upcoming events.**

The district utilizes a variety of mechanisms to communicate with its stakeholders. Examples include "Alert Now," administrative Wiki's, weekly newsletters to the School Board from the superintendent, and virtual meetings within district departments. In addition, district and school leadership maintain current Websites

that provide up-to-date information regarding district and school news. Parents and teachers noted that schools provided many opportunities for parents to come to school and be involved. These included technology nights, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) presentations, orientation opportunities, and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. The district seeks feedback from its stakeholders through an annual system-wide climate survey which is administered to students, parents, and school staffs. This survey is used in addition to the two-year climate survey administered through the Department of Public Instruction.

Communication among and between internal and external stakeholders is exceptional. "For example, vertical articulation occurs between schools in feeder districts." Various modes allow OCS to clearly communicate with district, school staff, as well as the community.

- **A commitment to improve instructional practice and increase student achievement is accomplished by embracing research-based innovations and strategies.**

As evidenced by the artifacts of professional development and practices, interviews with the superintendent, superintendent's leadership team, administrative team, principals and teacher interviews, and strategies learned through research-based practices are being integrated into instructional practices in the classroom. Research-based instructional strategies, such as AVID, Title I, exceptional children's programs, technology integration, freshman transition programs, and career development are utilized throughout the school system. Onslow County Schools has been designated a North Carolina Global District due to the implementation of innovations such as the Tiered Technology Vision and implementation of several innovation grants.

Providing innovative programs and practices ensures that the district fulfills its core business by designing engaging, challenging, and satisfying work for every student, every day.

- **There is a nurturing, caring environment that permeates the climate of each educational facility and the district as a whole.**

The district strategically builds relationships among its internal stakeholders at multiple levels within the organization. Mentoring programs are in place for teachers, assistant principals, and principals. Stakeholders indicated that these programs created strong bonds between professionals and provided much needed layers of support. While OCS is one of North Carolina's largest school districts, both parents and teachers indicated the system has gone to great lengths to create a sense of family among both internal and external participants. Students highlighted that their teachers cared for them and were trying to prepare them for college and to have successful jobs. They trust their teachers and felt safe at school. High school teachers noted that hugs were given and received throughout the day. In addition, the system as a whole is sensitive toward the strain military employment has on its families. The system and military work diligently to reduce the impact of these potentially traumatic events.

The nurturing, caring environment is a precursor to high level learning and teaching. When teachers and students are comfortable in their work and learning environments, student learning is enhanced.

- **District and school leaders are dedicated to providing appropriate and state-of-the-art instructional technology tools to enhance instructional delivery and student engagement through a three-tiered implementation plan.**

As evidenced by school visits and stakeholder interviews, the team found that technology tools such as



interactive white boards, interactive slates, and a vast array of software applications are used to enhance instruction. The district provides technology support staff and teacher training in the effective implementation of technology.

The system's commitment to instructional technology has resulted in enhanced opportunities for diverse learning styles and keeps the district positioned to stay abreast of cutting-edge instructional strategies aimed at student success.

## Required Actions

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following required actions for improvement. The team focused its required actions on those areas that, if addressed, will have the greatest impact on improving student performance and overall effectiveness of the school district. The Onslow County Schools will be held accountable for making progress on each of the required actions noted in this section. Following this review, the school district will be asked to submit a progress report on these required actions. The district should refer to the detail provided in the standard reports for guidance and greater depth on the required actions.

- **Develop system-wide protocols for Professional Learning Communities that target student achievement.**

Teachers and administrators often referred to a professional learning community as one way that the school system fosters professional growth; however, the process appears to vary across the district. The district has modeled a process, but schools across the system should implement the district model more consistently. The framework should include a timeline and calendar for meetings, agendas, minutes, and next steps or actions from each meeting. Most importantly, the professional learning community should focus on improving student achievement.

A professional learning community can be a strong stimulus for fostering dialog among professionals, but it is most effective when there is a framework of expectations that guide these conversations.

- **Implement system-wide pacing guides and align it with formative and benchmark assessments used by all schools.**

Interviews, observations and reviews of written documentation by the Quality Assurance Review team revealed that although some content specific pacing guides are available from the school system, the guides are not available in all content areas. In addition, schools and teachers are not required to use the school system provided pacing guides. On the school level there was some evidence that school administration and teachers are meeting to establish pacing guides within the school by content area and/or grade because the need for consistency is recognized by these educators. The school system has allowed schools to adopt varying texts by content areas as decided by the schools. For example, with the recent math adoption, school system leadership encouraged schools to adopt the same texts citing consistency as one of the concerns. However, the decision on adoption of the text was a site-based decision and not all schools adopted the same texts and some schools opted not to participate in the adoption at this time.

Observations and interviews revealed that the school system provides quarterly formative assessments that are optional for schools to use and that teachers within schools have developed their own formative assessments ranging from quarterly to every three weeks. A plethora of teacher created and software based

formative assessments were cited as used within the Onslow County Schools. While these assessments provide rich data sources, the use of the data is limited because district and system-wide analysis and disaggregation is not valid or reliable on the system level because of the variations in formative assessments. Interviews revealed that the quarterly assessments provided by the school system are not aligned with pacing guides when the teachers have created their own pacing guides. Onslow County Schools leadership reported that formative assessments are not analyzed on the system level because of the issues discussed above.

The implementation of system-wide pacing guides that are aligned with formative and benchmark assessments used by all schools will provide valid and reliable data that can be used by teachers across the seven districts in their Professional Learning Communities to share best practices and revise curriculum/instructional strategies as needed. System leadership and school administration will benefit from the alignment by having data that can be used to plan more effectively for professional development, provide appropriate and timely interventions for students, and provide frequent, short-cycle information regarding faculty who may need more support, training, or resources. Students and parents will have fewer challenges to face as they move from school to school within the system if students are instructed in classrooms using a variety of strategies but with consistent pacing and instructional materials, including textbooks.

- **Establish measurable outcomes for system and school goals by clearly defining performance expectations.**

The district and each school site develop strategic plans that include goals and processes that are presented to the Board of Education each year. All schools in the district share the same goal for system-wide improvement and achievement. At the core of each school's strategic plan are the overall goals of the school system. The school system has adopted 21st Century Goals which are carefully aligned with North Carolina's goal for future-ready students. The district has performance targets and evaluation measures in many different places. Some of these are found in various places throughout the strategic plan; some are found in data notebooks, and some are included in the school renewal plans. Even though there are performance goals set forth each year, not all of the school plans include the goals stated in measurable terms.

Having a clearly articulated document, which addresses performance targets and evaluative measures for current and expected levels for student learning, will contribute to a unified and coherent plan for both the district and the schools. The document will also give the school system clearer data on system-wide student performance.

- **Evaluate all instructional programs through a system-wide process to determine instructional effectiveness.**

While the team found evidence that program evaluation is taking place, it is not conducted through a district-wide process. The team found a tendency towards anecdotal, informal and site-based evaluations of programs and strategies. The lack of consistency in assessments and expected outcomes limit effective evaluation of programs and strategies. In an effort to achieve consistency in the evaluation of the effectiveness of instructional programs, system-wide evaluation tools should be implemented. Evaluation tools should focus primarily on determining the amount of student achievement. These tools should have the capability of being correlated to instructional objectives. Disaggregation and utilization of all assessment data should be published in a manner that allows for local school implementation as well as system-wide consistency.

Periodic measurement of gains should drive all instructional programs. Reliable and valid data should be used when determining the expansion or abandonment of a program or strategy.

- **Enhance educational preparation for the global workplace by developing short range and long range plans to expand career and technical opportunities and offer additional foreign language opportunities at all levels.**

Interviews and reviews of documentation conducted by the Quality Assurance Review Team provided evidence that the mission of Onslow County School (OSC) is to provide globally competitive education. This mission is widely interpreted by students, administrators, faculty, staff, and stakeholders to include proficiency with technology, 21st century workplace skills, and mastery of at least one foreign language. In order to meet these expectations, a commitment to expanding and enhancing career and technical opportunities and foreign language instruction at all levels will need to be priorities for the school system. OCS has received a grant of land from the county for future construction of a Career Launch Center to provide expanded opportunities for higher levels of technical and vocational certification.

Completion of this workforce development project would support the school system’s mission. Also, increasing opportunities for beginning studies of multiple languages and cultures prior to high school, like middle school Spanish and Elementary International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, will provide students a competitive advantage in the global marketplace.

**Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools:** The team reviewed the district's adherence to each of the AdvancED standards. The findings from this review are provided in the next section of this report.

## Next Steps

The school district should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the commendations section to maximize their impact on the school district.
3. Develop action plans to address the required actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the required actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school district's efforts to improve student performance and district effectiveness.
5. Two years following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. Lack of progress can result in a change in accreditation status.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

## Resources

AdvancED offers a range of resources to support your school district as it acts on the findings in this report. The AdvancED Resource Network, available at [www.advanc-ed.org/resourcenetwork](http://www.advanc-ed.org/resourcenetwork), provides an online network of peer-to-peer practices, best practices, and resources and tools designed to help school districts and their schools with continuous improvement.

### **Celebrating Accreditation**

Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review Team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for review and action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and communicates it to the school district. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school district should celebrate its achievement with the community. Flags, door decals, diploma seals, and other related items can be ordered from the website to help you share your accomplishment with your community.

### **Summary**

The accreditation process engages the school district, its schools, and community in an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. The next steps in this journey are to build on the commendations and address the required actions noted in this report. Doing so will enable the school district to advance in its quest for excellence and deepen the fulfillment of its mission for all students.

# Standards for Accreditation

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the district demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

The Quality Assurance Review Team divided into standard teams to review each standard and prepare a standards report summarizing the team's findings. These standard reports, along with the quality assurance findings that follow these reports, provided the basis for the team's identification of over-arching commendations and required actions presented earlier in this report. The reports submitted by each team are provided on the following pages for the district's review and use. Each report reflects its respective team's unique voice, perspective, and deliberations. The reports can be used to help enrich and deepen the district's understanding of the overall commendations and required actions.

## Standard 1. Vision & Purpose

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

### **Description:**

The vision of excellence and 21st Century goals of Onslow County Schools are understood by all stakeholders. This was evident from the interviews with district staff, school staff, support staff, parents, and members of the community.

The vision of the Onslow County Schools, has served as the district vision for many years and is revisited each school year at the district level and by each school. The system develops a strategic plan that is approved every five years by the Board of Education and stakeholders. The plan is updated yearly and monitored for effectiveness in meeting all goals and to review student learning. The district plan includes the vision and goals for the system. The district goals and their alignment with the vision and purpose are reviewed yearly by the Quality Council to assess current conditions and performances of the school system as well as a determination of needs. The Quality Council is made up of district administrators, teachers, school administrators, support staff, students, parents, and members of the community. The district vision is visible on the school website and printed material throughout the district.

Data obtained from interviews indicated the superintendent is highly visible in the school community and is passionate in her communication of the vision, mission and goals. Her “visionary” leadership encourages others to commit to the vision and goals of the district. The administration in each school indicated they are held accountable for meeting the expectations. Staff members interviewed commented that there is a “focus towards a common vision” and an expectation of excellence in all areas.

### **Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- There is a strong sense of commitment to the vision, mission, and goals of OCS by all stakeholders.
- The district promotes an educational culture that emphasizes commitment to excellence that is infused throughout all levels and departments.
- The use of laptops/smart phones for Algebra I students leading to 98% proficiency on the state test

is a good example of excellence noted in the vision.

- The goal of preparing students to enter a competitive workforce and to compete at a global level is evidenced by the partnerships they have initiated with Mexico, China, and Denmark.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Define clearly the goals of the district ensuring that they are specific and measurable.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the Onslow County Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Vision & Purpose" standard.

## Standard 2. Governance & Leadership

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

**Description:**

The Onslow County Board of Education establishes policies and procedures to effectively operate the school system and communicates these through a policy manual that is widely distributed to all stakeholders, including posting on the district Website. Operational procedures implementing district policies are shared with stakeholders through a variety of staff meetings.

All stakeholders are represented on the Quality Council which reviews and revises the Strategic Plan. It is obvious that all stakeholder groups take an active role in continuous improvement and are proud of the collaborative process that is used and are able to articulate the vision and mission of the school division. In addition, the System Involvement Team is critical in preparing the Strategic Plan for the district. Stakeholders have meaningful roles in strategic planning and are valued in the decision-making process.

Onslow County Schools and the School Board have a good relationship with the county commissioners, who have supported a 10% teacher supplement, a \$90 million bond and established a local funding formula. The positive relationship between the governing boards leverages the assets of the community for the benefits of all citizens.

School board members demonstrate their commitment to professional growth by participating in workshops and conferences provided by the North Carolina School Board Association and through Webinars, district workshops and weekly updates with the superintendent. An excellent relationship exists between the superintendent and the school board exemplifying a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities of each. The district leadership provides the vision for the school division as a leader for the 21st century and shares the responsibility for school improvement.

Onslow County Schools demonstrates a strong emphasis on leadership development at all levels, including mentorships and/or ongoing training for teacher assistants, new and experienced teachers, assistant principals, principals, school and central office faculty and staffs, and new school board members.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Onslow County Schools is to be commended for its strong emphasis on leadership development and professional growth across the school division.
- Positive and collegial relationships abound in schools, offices, and classrooms throughout the system.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Align resources with district needs to leverage funds in difficult financial times.
- Strengthen the district's role in the process of school-based improvement efforts to ensure that district and school level targets are met.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the Onslow County Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Governance & Leadership" standard.

## Standard 3. Teaching & Learning

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

**Description:**

OCS implements the North Carolina (NC) Standard Course of Study (SCOS) and the Accountability and Curriculum Reform Effort (ACRE) established by the state Department of Public Instruction. These indicators include the essential knowledge and skills by grade and content area. OCS staff members have facilitated creation of model pacing guides in the core subject areas for optional use by schools. Also, teachers have developed pacing guides in order to guide in instructional delivery on a daily basis. Grade level and team level meetings are held at the schools on a regular basis to facilitate consistency in instructional planning. Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) are in the beginning stages of implementation in order to enhance consistency and articulation of curriculum and instruction throughout the school system.

Teachers have received training in Professional Learning Communities, Safe and Civil Schools, summative data analysis, Instructional Intervention, and technology integration. Classroom observations and interviews conducted by the Quality Assurance Review Team (QART) did yield examples of instruction characterized by innovative practices and strategies such as use of manipulatives, cooperative groups, smaller learning communities, advisor/advisee, content based academies, graduation projects, cubic units, Reader's Theater, leveled texts, and application of technology (interactive white boards, palm pilots, e-books, and Smartphones). Title One has implemented the Academic Derby and the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) Bus to promote literacy. Media centers' collections have been updated although continuing needs exist in this area.

The district realizes the importance of data in making instructional decisions that are meaningful and relevant. The district has established a Professional Learning Community of school level administrators to conduct a book study on use of data and to meet regularly to analyze district and school summative data. Examples of available summative data include the North Carolina End of Grade Test and End of Course Tests, Education Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS), K-2 Literacy Assessments, Vocational Competency Achievement Tracking System (VOCATS), and the Writing Assessment System. The QART

interviews revealed school and grade level connections between the disaggregation of summative data, school selected formative assessments, and planning for instruction to address gaps in student achievement and to prescribe interventions. Evidence was unavailable of system-wide consistency in use of pacing guides, textbook adoption or formative assessments. The absence of system-wide consistency with these tools inhibits data collection to inform administrators and teachers about effective delivery of a guaranteed, viable curriculum to address the needs of a highly transient population.

Support personnel such as Literacy Facilitators, Instructional Technology Facilitators, Military Liaisons, and Career Development Coordinators are provided to schools to assist in academic improvement. There is a high percentage of National Board Certified teachers as compared to other schools in this region of the state. A plethora of professional development opportunities are available although continuing budget reductions have impacted this area of strength. The administration, faculty, and staff are committed, dedicated and focused on meeting the needs of all students. OCS individualizes to meet the needs of each student by providing school specific support through Instructional Intervention Teams and Personal Education Plans for students as needed.

The purchase and implementation of technology is a high priority for OCS. District and school leaders are dedicated to providing appropriate and state-of-the-art instructional technology tools to enhance instructional delivery and student engagement through a three-tiered implementation plan. Interactive white boards, Netbooks, Smartphones, etc. have been added and integrated into the instructional program on a regular basis through grants and priority budgeting of system and school funds. OCS provides the necessary and important support for technology through its Instructional Technology (IT) department. Throughout the interview process, teachers and staff indicated that the district does an outstanding job in providing the necessary materials for teaching and learning.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The staff and students of the district have access to 21st century technology in their classrooms and throughout the schools.
- The district provides the necessary technology tools and training for teachers to use digital resources appropriately and effectively in the classroom to augment student learning.
- Staff are committed to improving instructional practices and increasing student achievement by embracing research-based innovations and strategies.
- There is a high percentage of National Board Certified teachers as compared to other districts in this region of the state.
- Instruction Intervention Teams and processes provide targeted early interventions to improve student learning.
- OCS leadership are available to help support school level initiatives by providing professional development, assistance with data analysis, and helping schools secure needed resources.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Enhance educational preparation for the global workplace by developing short range and long range plans by expanding career and technical opportunities and offering additional foreign language opportunities at all levels.
- Implement system-wide pacing guides and align it with formative and benchmark assessments used by all schools.
- Develop system-wide protocols for Professional Learning Communities that target student achievement.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall



assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the Onslow County Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Teaching & Learning" standard.

## Standard 4. Documenting & Using Results

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

### Description:

The school and district environments are data rich. The district has implemented a variety of professional development sessions, Professional Learning Communities, Instructional Intervention Teams, etc. to assist in reviewing and using summative data. Data are gathered and analyzed to assess growth and to drive instruction. The district and schools rely on an array of informal assessments and observations as well as state mandated assessments to generate student performance data. Primary students are assessed with a state provided K-2 instrument for math and reading. State mandated End-of-Grade tests are administered for students in math and reading for grades three through eight and in science for grades five and eight. The writing project is used to determine proficiency in grades four and seven while a tenth grade writing test is given to ensure proficiency at the secondary level. Secondary students are assessed using the End-of-Course tests in all required subjects. VOCATS assessments are used to monitor learning in career and technical courses at middle and high school levels. A high school cohort has been involved in assessing the effectiveness of using 21st century tools for accessing mathematics. A formal data collection instrument has not been used to assess the effectiveness of the district's literacy facilitators in Title 1 elementary schools. The superintendent stated, "We are inundated with data."

A variety of informal assessments such as teacher-made tests, high school graduation projects, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) notebooks (fifth-12th grades), USA Test Prep, Plato, EduTest, ClassScape and student portfolios are used to generate additional performance data. Some students and staff maintain data notebooks to track performance. Data are periodically reviewed with the district's Quality Council and the Systems Involvement Teams. Reports are generated to stakeholders via state report cards, ABCs Accountability and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results for each school and the school system. These reports are found on the Website, distributed to students to take home and results are published in the local paper. Individual student information is available for parents through report cards and planned parent/teacher conferences. Student reports from various assessments are distributed to students and parents as they become available. The successful transition of students from one level to the next is a focus for some areas in the district. The district supports individual teacher technology goals by providing district support through training and the provision of resources to support student engagement in the classroom.

Team or grade level meetings are conducted in schools to review results of school-selected formative assessments. The use of consistent formative assessments across the school system appears to be in the beginning stages. A systematic approach to short cycle data analysis by OCS executive leadership in order to inform and guide instruction in a real-time environment needs to be developed further. Individual schools create curriculum pacing and cross-curricula integration in the absence of specific direction from the district. Monitoring instructional delivery of a guaranteed, viable curriculum across the district can be strengthened as Professional Learning Community teams connect instructional pacing and short-cycle assessment analysis with systemic, district-wide instructional responses. With systematic processes for planning and interventions directly tied to results from formative assessments, instruction can become

more effective especially for the highly transient populations served by the district.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- There is an emphasis on data at the school and district levels.
- A variety of data are collected.
- Clear and timely communication tools are used to share data with all stakeholders.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Evaluate all instructional programs through a system-wide process to determine instructional effectiveness.
- Create and administrate a uniform system of formative assessments to ensure consistency in measuring expected performance outcomes to increase student achievement.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Onslow County Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Documenting & Using Results" standard.

## Standard 5. Resource & Support Systems

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

**Description:**

Onslow County Schools employees and other stakeholders believe that their people are their greatest resource. The system provides the human, financial, and physical resources to fulfill its vision, mission, and beliefs. These resources enable the district to implement innovative programs and practices that address student learning needs, enable students to achieve expectations for learning 21st century skills, promote student achievement, and support relationships that strengthen the family and community.

Evidence indicates that 98.62% of all teachers hired meet the highly qualified status (SY2009). Job Fairs, on-line applications, and skilled interviews and background checks assure that the system puts a priority on the hiring of competent teachers. Orientations are provided at both the system and school level. On-going mentoring is provided for all new teachers, school leaders, and board members. Due to faculty turnover rates over 15.1%, the system has provided a 10% bonus to teachers who complete their contract year.

Professional learning opportunities provide both new and experienced staff with the tools to continue improving their craft. Leadership courses are provided to equip aspiring leaders as well as assistant principals to move into increased leadership roles in the future. Interviews with teachers revealed that a great deal of support is provided to the schools in the areas of data collection, instructional technology support (11 instructional technology facilitators), and curriculum services.

Facilities are of various ages but have all been upgraded to accommodate new technologies. Additionally, schools are clean and well-maintained. Bond referendums in the amount of \$105 million continue to support equitable upgrades to schools as well as the building of new schools to meet system growth needs. A strategic building plan is in place to meet increased enrollment through the year 2014.

The district has demonstrated sound financial management, operates a general fund of approximately 50 million dollars, and has a \$ 7.7 million unreserved, undesignated fund balance. During the past year, a local funding formula was approved by the County Commissioners to be put in place July, 2010. This will assure a level of local funding that will be maintained in the face of anticipated growing student enrollment. In addition, a growing percentage of funding may be awarded to the school system based on increased test scores.

Crisis plans are school-specific but reflect a system-wide approach to meeting particular situations as they arise.

The annual budget supports Onslow County Schools' strategic plan. Sufficient funding is provided to each school to address its varied instructional priorities and initiatives. Additional funding is provided by both private and public grants. Partnerships with several colleges and universities further support the vision and mission of the school system. In addition, many programs and grants such as Trades Day, Bright Ideas, and Businesses Assisting Schools Educating Students (BASES) bring resources to the community in both volunteer hours and instructional funds.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Quality instructional support is provided to schools by the central office.
- The administration, faculty, and staff working in the OCS are committed, dedicated, and focused on meeting the needs of all students.
- The necessary resources are available to meet the needs of a wide range of learners despite economic conditions.
- Community support is clearly evident in the passage of the bond issues, the implementation of business-supported grants, and the parent surveys and interviews.
- A commitment to the instructional availability, support, and usage of varied technologies exists at the system and school level and is clearly supported by parents and the community.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Establish a funding plan for the equitable roll-out of “Tier II” technology and its replacement over time.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the Onslow County Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Resource & Support Systems" standard.

## Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications & Relationships

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

**Description:**

Onslow County Schools supports district goals through its commitment to systematic two-way communication with various stakeholders. The district utilizes a variety of mechanisms to communicate with its stakeholders. Examples include administrative Wiki's, weekly newsletters to the School Board from the superintendent, and virtual meetings within district departments. In addition, district and school leadership maintain current Websites that provide up-to-date information regarding district and school news. Parents noted that schools and teachers were diligent in their communication with them through ALERT NOW, emails, phone calls, progress reports, school newsletters, and conferences. Furthermore, parents highlighted that they were never taken by surprise when the report card came home because teachers had been in communication with them all along the way. Parents and teachers noted that the school provided many opportunities for parents to come to school and be involved. These included technology nights, AVID presentations, orientation opportunities, and PTO meetings. The district seeks feedback from its stakeholders through an annual system-wide climate survey which is administered to students, parents, and school staffs. This survey is used in addition to the two-year climate survey administered through the Department of Public Instruction. In addition to these larger surveys, smaller surveys have been used to garner feedback from their stakeholders with specific issues, such as early release days.

The district has developed strong community partners and benefits from a close relationship with local business and industry. The district's internship program illustrates this partnership with 185 businesses providing internship opportunities for students throughout the district. The internships have corresponded with the district's graduation project as a requirement for graduation. In addition, the school and community have established Businesses Assisting Schools and Educating Students (BASES). Through the BASES program, Onslow County Schools documented approximately 1.3 million dollars in services, goods, and financial support during the 2008-09 school year. Additionally, the system has recorded and received over 37,500 hours of support from volunteers interacting directly with school programs and students. School personnel reported more than six million dollars has been contributed to the school system since the inception of the program. The district continues to build upon their relationships with local business and industry through Trades Days, a local competition of area high schools in Career and Technical Education domains. This event further engages local industry and provides motivation for its students.

In addition to building strong relationships with external stakeholders, the district strategically builds relationships among its internal stakeholders at multiple levels within the organization (e.g., vertical articulation occurs between schools in feeder districts). Mentoring programs are in place for teachers, assistant principals, and principals. Stakeholders indicated that these programs created strong bonds between professionals and provided much needed layers of support. While OCS is one of North Carolina's largest school districts, both parents and teachers indicated the system has gone to great lengths to create a sense of family among both internal and external participants. There is a nurturing, caring environment that permeates the climate of each educational facility and the district as a whole.

The Quality Council is a noteworthy vehicle for communication that encourages participation, builds a sense of ownership, and provides parents and stakeholders with a true voice in the planning and direction

of the school district. One former member noted how good it felt to serve on this committee and know that his voice was heard.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- There is a nurturing, caring environment that permeates the climate of each educational facility and the district as a whole.
- The district utilizes diverse modes of communication to provide stakeholders' access to information about student performance, district and school activities, and upcoming events.
- The system benefits from the development of strong collaborative partnerships with various community agencies and businesses that help students learn and enhance improvement efforts.
- School and district leaders promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership by giving stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Expand efforts to find creative solutions for involving hard to reach parents such as evening and weekend opportunities.
- Ensure frequent updating of school and teacher Web pages throughout the district.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the Onslow County Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Stakeholder Communications & Relationships" standard.

## Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

**Description:**

The District Strategic Plan is the primary resource for the continuous improvement of student learning in the system. The system vision, mission, and goals were revised in response to the state's adoption of the Future Ready Core in 2007. School strategic plans are aligned with the District Strategic Plan. The plans are created using needs assessments that include data from the previous year, including End of Year Reports and monthly statistics. Reports include major and minor improvements. Products are provided to the Board in DC form, presented over two days, and explained by administrators. The Board questions before voting to pass and approve plans.

The system supports the implementation of these plans at each site. The following are examples of the commitment of staff to a continuum of services that provide for student learners at all grade levels and in all departments.

The system utilizes state K-two assessments, as well as establishing running records for primary students, to check literacy progress and students' ability to learn to read. These and benchmark assessments continue in grade three through five. Supplementary materials and intervention strategies are used to insure continuous improvement. The State Improvement Project provides teacher demonstrations and ensures the fidelity of programs. Onslow County Schools participate in the state's pilot use of a handle palm and Wireless Generation Software to measure guided reading skills of students. Student discussion

of multiple strategies to solve problems and writing down what they are thinking aide early math number sense, understanding, and retention.

In later grades, teachers use system provided EVADES data to identify at risk students. These students are provided immediate interventions and tutoring to ensure progress toward grade level achievement. Numerous electronic and teacher-made formative assessments are used to measure progress throughout the year. Ongoing communication, progress reports, and report cards provide timely feedback for students and parents. Instructional intervention strategies attempt to accelerate learning before testing and identification of special education students occurs.

In addition, continuous improvement processes for particular content areas are evident. For example, three types of writing, graded by criterion referenced rubrics, are included in portfolios in grades six through eight to show growth. Opportunities for enrichment exist when students excel. For example, middle school students take Spanish through distance learning and upper level math classes at the high school.

Similar processes are used to ensure students' needs are met, and teachers take care to establish environments that are conducive to learning. These include safety, social well being, and physical wellness.

There can be no substitute for Highly Qualified teachers. Numerous studies report their impact on student learning. Principals are instructional leaders in the Onslow system. Surveys assess beginning and experienced teachers. Results inform the revising of plans to provide staff development. Whether content knowledge, pedagogy, or use of technology, teachers are supported with training. The improvement of their knowledge base allows them to improve the continuous learning of students. Teacher assistants who aid classroom instruction are also afforded professional development. Student achievement results from Title II and other system resources are used to place teachers where needed.

Continuous improvement is evident in the fact that 2005 challenges noted in Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) last report have been addressed and negatives have been turned into positives. Yearly progress reports have been done by each school and feeder district. These include transition plans, peer reviewed for consistency that note negative and positive results.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The vision includes an expectation of excellence for all staff that leads to the expectation of excellence for all students to learn at high levels.
- There is a strong commitment that creates a professional culture focused on excellence in education which values feedback provided by AdvancED and strives to incorporate all recommendations and opportunities for growth.
- A system of continuous improvement of strategic plans at the district and school levels is apparent.
- Administrative and faculty development allows people to lead the learning of all students better.
- The improved use of 21st Century technology from assessments to classroom instruction makes lessons engaging and aids student learning.
- Improvements are seen in the school to home connection that allow parents to be more involved in their children's learning.
- Early tutoring for students and support from programs like AVID help ensure student success as learners.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Consolidate assessments across the system to make for a more consistent understanding of student progress.

- Design more lessons that require students to use technology to complete assignments to improve student learning.
- District direction is needed in order to come to consensus about particular assessments and what constitutes excellent student learning.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Onslow County Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Commitment to Continuous Improvement" standard.

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## Quality Assurance Findings

The Quality Assurance Review Team examined the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance. The team reviewed the district's practices and methods to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results. The team provides the following findings in this area.

### Description

In visiting the OCS for determination of district accreditation, the QAR team examined information and artifacts to ensure AdvancED quality standards were fulfilled and methods for quality assurances were in place.

Two teams, the Quality Council and the Systems Involvement Team, comprised of representation from the Board of Education, central office staff, administrators, teachers, classified employees, parents, students, business leaders, and higher education partners, to assist in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the AdvancED standards. All schools have similarly convened two teams to assist in aligning their strategic plans with the district plan. Yearly climate surveys are administered to students, teachers, parents, and community members. Results are compiled by the district and reviewed at the district and schools.

Documentation for each standard was maintained in a notebook and a video presentation was produced and posted on the district website addressing how each standard was addressed.

It is evident from the interviews and observations conducted by the Quality Assurance Review Team that the people - employees, parents, community stakeholders and volunteers- are the system's greatest strength. All stakeholders communicated an open, collaborative, working relationship throughout the district, with a strong sense that they have highly qualified leadership. A strong sense of caring employees throughout the system was cited numerous times with specific examples of supportive actions provided.

The vision is clearly communicated and supported throughout the district with all stakeholders. Methods of system and school communications include the Alert Now Broadcast system, newsletters, email, and county and school websites. A three-tiered technology implementation plan is in place, with the final implementation of student Netbooks, Smartphones, and Ipods just beginning. There are strong collaborative partnerships with various community agencies and businesses.

The district and schools use extensive amounts of data from a variety of sources, state End of Grade and End of Course tests, local K-2 assessments, 3-5 assessments, Edutest, USA Test Prep, AVID, AIMSWeb, to make instructional decisions within the district and schools.

Inconsistencies in the use of system-wide pacing guides and implementation of benchmark assessments were noted between schools. There were inconsistencies in the determination of monitoring processes of strategic plan implementation. Specific percentages of expected growth for monitoring purposes were not noted in the system or school plans. Consideration should be given to developing measurable objectives in order to more effectively monitor continuous improvement.

### Strengths

- The formation and participation of the Quality Councils and System Involvement Teams strengthens the overall planning process.



- The varied communication strategies keep all stakeholders informed within the school system.

### **Opportunities**

- Establish measurable outcomes for system and school goals by clearly defining performance expectations.
- Implement system-wide pacing guides and align with formative and benchmark assessment used by all schools.

## Conclusion

The commendations and required actions in this report are designed to focus the school district on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student performance and system effectiveness. While powerful in potential, the commendations and required actions only have meaning when acted upon by the school district and its schools. The strength of this report lies in the school district's commitment to using the findings to continuously improve. The key is action. The school district is encouraged to use the report as a call to action, a tool to sustain momentum in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The team identified required actions for improvement that the school district will need to address. Following this review, the school district will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the district leadership, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for hosting the review team. The team wishes the district and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS-CASI-NC accreditation with AdvancED.

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# Appendix

## Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Dr. Billy Floyd, Chair (AdvancED)
- Mrs. Hannah Youngblood, Vice Chair (Johnston County Schools)
- Mrs. Angie Settoon, Team Member (Vinton Elementary School)
- Cathy Mason, Team Member (Samposn County Schools)
- Mr. Frank Heath, Team Member (P. W. Moore Elementary School)
- Dr. Gregory Little, Team Member (Roanoke Rapids City Schools)
- Laura Williamson, Team Member
- Dr. Lauren Williams, Team Member (Columbia County Schools)
- Dr. Renee Matthews, Team Member
- Teresa Carroll, Team Member (North Whiteville Academy)

## AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems

The AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. As school districts reach higher levels of implementation of the standards, they will have a greater capacity to support ever-increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. Each of the seven standards listed below has corresponding indicators and impact statements which can be accessed at [www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org).

### **Vision and Purpose**

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

### **Governance and Leadership**

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

### **Teaching and Learning**

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

### **Documenting and Using Results**

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

### **Resource and Support Systems**

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

### **Stakeholder Communications and Relationships**

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

**Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

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