



External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to the External Review Process.....	1
Part I: Findings.....	2
Accreditation Standards and Indicators.....	2
Learning Environment.....	29
Part II: Conclusion.....	30
Summary of the External Review.....	30
Required Actions.....	32
Part III: Addenda.....	34
Next Steps.....	34
Celebrating Accreditation.....	34
About AdvancED.....	34

Introduction to the External Review Process

Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed more than 100 years ago by American universities and secondary schools, and designed primarily to distinguish schools adhering to a set of educational standards. Today the accreditation process is used at all levels of education, and is recognized for its ability to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education.

Institutions seeking to gain or retain accreditation must meet AdvancED standards specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. External Review is a rigorous process that includes examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards, but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Part I: Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It also includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, observations of the Learning Environment, as well as Required Actions.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

Standards help to delineate what matters. They provide a common language through which an education community can engage in conversations about educational improvement, system effectiveness, and achievement. They serve as a foundation for planning and implementing improvement strategies and activities and for measuring success. AdvancED's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective educators and leaders from the fields of practice, research, and policy who applied professional wisdom, deep knowledge of effective practice, and the best available research to craft a set of robust standards that ensure excellence and continuous improvement. The standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains an evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, conclusions concerning Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards, and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review Team. Indicators are evaluated and rated individually by the External Review Team using a four-level performance rubric. The Standard Performance Level is the average of indicator scores for the standard.

Standard 1: Purpose and Direction

Purpose and direction are critical to successful institutions. A study conducted in 2010 by the London-based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reported that "in addition to improving performance, the research indicates that having a sense of shared purpose also improves employee engagement" and that "...lack of understanding around purpose can lead to demotivation and emotional detachment, which in turn lead to a disengaged and dissatisfied workforce."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the institutions' vision that is supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Standard	Standard Performance Level
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External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

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.			3.75
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Interviews •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •District purpose statements - past and present •Survey results •Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders •Written District Quality Assurance Review procedures and documents that monitor its schools' adherence to the district purpose and direction •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Minutes from meetings related to development of the district's purpose and direction •Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness •Accreditation Report 	4
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements •Written District Quality Assurance Review procedures and documents that monitor schools' adherence to the district purpose and direction and that of the school •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 •Accreditation Report •Interviews 	4

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

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.	<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•Interviews•District Quality Assurance Review plans that document two-way communication on district and school effectiveness and learning, thinking, and life skills•Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans•Survey results•Accreditation Report•Statements or documents about ethical and professional practices•Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs•Statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning•The district strategic plan	4
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Accreditation Report•Examples of schools continuous improvement plans•District Quality Assurance Review plans that document two-way communication on district and school effectiveness and learning, thinking, and life skills•Survey results•Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs•Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings•Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders•The district data profile•The district strategic plan	3

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The school system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.

1.1

School and system leaders, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders indicated through interviews their knowledge of and involvement in the development of the system mission, vision, goals, and beliefs. More than 1800 stakeholders, including the mayor and board of aldermen, school board members, parents, business leaders, students, teachers, and school/district leaders provided input into the development of the mission, vision, goals, and belief statements. The resulting mission, vision, goals, and beliefs are prominently displayed in buildings throughout the system, on the district website, and on brochures, newsletters, and other printed communications.

2. The school leadership at all levels of the system engages in a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise and communicate its purpose for student success by sponsoring an annual Professional Learning Summer Retreat.

1.2

The school leadership at all levels of the system reviews and revises supports for challenging and equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students. The school leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning. School and system leaders participate in an annual summer retreat where the system leadership meets with the school leadership teams to review, revisit and revise programs and supports for equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students. System and school leadership share high expectations for professional practice and continuously seeks innovative improvement opportunities through collegial sharing and problem solving.

3. The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system embody a culture of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

1.3

All staff embodies a culture of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and reflects these beliefs through their individual professional practices. During the stakeholder interviews at the schools, parents, teachers, and students passionately expressed their great sense of pride in being a part of the Pass Christian School District. The school leadership, teachers, staff, and students confirmed through interviews their commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning. Teachers indicated their commitment to each student's success by volunteering after school to support student learning. Students reflected on the additional efforts teachers use to make learning fun for all students. Parents indicated that the teachers went the "extra mile" to support all students in achieving at high levels.

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. Implement a specific continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning. 1.4

Interviews with the school leadership teams and school leaders revealed that the system does not require the use of a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning. While all staff shared best practices regarding data analysis, interventions, goal setting, and progress monitoring and evaluation, the evidence revealed limited specific measures or tools required by the system. A documented, systematic continuous improvement process can support greater alignment of the improvement processes used at each school.

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

Governance and leadership are key factors in raising institutional quality. Leaders, both local administrators and governing boards/authorities, are responsible for ensuring all learners achieve while also managing many other facets of an institution. Institutions that function effectively do so without tension between the governing board/authority, administrators, and educators and have established relationships of mutual respect and a shared vision (Feuerstein & Opfer, 1998). In a meta-analysis of school leadership research, Leithwood & Sun (2012) found that leaders (school and governing boards/authority) can significantly "influence school conditions through their achievement of a shared vision and agreed-on goals for the organization, their high expectations and support of organizational members, and practices that strengthen school culture and foster collaboration within the organization." With the increasing demands of accountability placed on institutional leaders, leaders who empower others need considerable autonomy and involve their school communities to attain school improvement goals. Leaders who engage in such practices experience a greater level of success (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Similarly, governing boards/authorities that focus on policy-making are more likely to allow school leaders the autonomy to make decisions that impact teachers and students and are less responsive to politicization than boards/authorities that respond to vocal citizens (Greene, 1992).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has leaders who are advocates for the institution's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The institution's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Standard		Standard Performance Level
The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.		3.0
Indicator	Source of Evidence	Performance Level

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Observations•Student handbooks•Staff handbooks•Accreditation Report•District operations manuals•Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions•School handbooks	3
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest•Proof of legal counsel•List of assigned staff for compliance•Observations•Historical compliance data•Interviews•Governing authority minutes relating to training•Governing authority training plan•Assurances, certifications•Accreditation Report•Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies•Governing code of ethics•Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest	2

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

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.	<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•Observations•Interviews•Accreditation Report•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	3
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	<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•Examples of decisions aligned with the school's purpose statement•Interviews•Survey results•Observations•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•Accreditation Report	4

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Minutes from meetings with stakeholders•Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action•Interviews•Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys•Survey responses•Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan•Communication plan•Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan•Observations	3
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation•Accreditation Report•Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation•Job specific criteria•Observations•Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice throughout the system and student success noted•Representative supervision and evaluation reports	3

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The availability of evidence provided the External Review team with the assurance that district policies and practices provide clear requirements, direction for and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system. 2.1

The availability of evidence provided the External Review team with assurances the district leadership has fiscal policies and procedures in place to maintain the integrity of accountability. The State Auditor of Mississippi acknowledged the district for the excellence in carrying out the management of the prescribed state and local statues of fiscal management. The fiscal accountability promotes student success, effective instruction and stakeholder confidence in a strong educational system.

2. Observations and interviews revealed the district leadership and staff at all levels foster a culture consistent with the district's purpose and direction. 2.4

Through observations and interviews, the district leadership has consistently developed a learning culture which fosters the district's implementation of the purpose statement and direction of the school system. Teachers and staff in each school indicated the shared responsibilities and empowerment in the decision-making process in relation to student achievement and instruction. The communication and collaboration between the district leadership team, school administration and staff are very evident per information gathered from interviews with all stakeholders. A sense of mutual respect permeates the culture of the district, creating a district climate conducive for school district success.

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. Assess the current practice of how school board members, collectively and individually, respond to and communicate with teachers, staff and community. 2.2

Survey and interviews indicated the district governing body must work to ensure all decisions made by the body are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, and are ethical and free of conflict of interest. The perception is key to the continued success of the school district. The district's governing body should comply with all policies, procedures, laws and regulations and function as a cohesive unit for the benefit of effective school operation and student learning.

Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning

A high-quality and effective system has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve to their highest potential and be prepared for a successful future. The positive influence an effective educator has on learning is a combination of "student motivation, parental involvement" and the "quality of leadership" (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Research also suggests that quality educators must have a variety of quantifiable and intangible characteristics, which include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The school's curriculum and instructional program should develop learners' skills that lead them to think about the world in complex ways (Conley, 2007) and prepare them to have knowledge that extends beyond the academic areas. In order to achieve these goals, teachers must have pedagogical skills as well as content knowledge (Baumert et al, 2010). The acquisition and refinement of teachers' pedagogical skills occur most effectively through collaboration and professional development. These are a "necessary approach to improving teacher quality" (Colbert et al, 2008). According to Marks, Louis, & Printy (2002), school staff that engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study

conducted by Horng, Klasik, & Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective schools, "supports teachers by creating collaborative work environments." Institutional leaders have a responsibility to provide experiences, resources, and time for educators to engage in meaningful professional learning that promotes student learning and educator quality.

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Standard			Standard Performance Level
The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.			3.42
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Course, program, or school schedules •Survey results •Course or program descriptions •Student work across courses or programs •Observations •Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices •Enrollment patterns for various courses and programs •Learning expectations for different courses and programs •Interviews •Lesson plans •Posted learning objectives •Accreditation Report •Descriptions of instructional techniques 	4

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•A description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment•Standards-based report cards•Observations•Interviews•Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices•Curriculum writing process•Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps•Profile of educational model or delivery system•Curriculum guides•Common assessments•Accreditation Report•Surveys results•Program descriptions•Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum	4
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External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Authentic assessments•Findings from supervisor formal and informal observations•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•Interdisciplinary projects•Observations•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation•Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource•Surveys results•Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge•Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool•Interviews•Accreditation Report	3
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External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum maps•Accreditation Report•Supervision and evaluation procedures•Documentation of collection of lesson plans, grade books, or other data record systems•Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions•Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices•Surveys results•Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process•Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs•Interviews•Observations•Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success	3
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External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Common language, protocols and reporting tools•Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees•Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings•Survey results•Professional development funding to promote professional learning communities•Interviews•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•Accreditation Report	4
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance•Survey results•Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction•Interviews•Accreditation Report•Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning	4

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Survey results•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•Observations•Interviews•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	3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Performance-based report cards•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance•Observations•Survey results•Volunteer program with variety of options for participation•List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days•Accreditation Report•Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress•Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process•Interviews•Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning	4

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum and activities of structures for adults advocating on behalf of students•Accreditation Report•Survey results•Interviews•List of students matched to adults who advocate on their behalf	2
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices•Survey results•Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting•Observations•Accreditation Report•District quality control procedures including the monitoring of grading practices across all schools•Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs•Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting	3
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Evaluation tools for professional learning•Survey results•District quality control procedures showing implementation plan for professional development for district and school staff•District professional development plan involving the district and all schools•Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs•Crosswalk between professional learning and district purpose and direction•Accreditation Report•Observations•Interviews	4

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services•Survey results•List of learning support services and student population served by such services•Interviews•Accreditation Report•Observations•Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning•Data used to identify unique learning needs of students	3
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Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The curriculum offers rigorous opportunities for all students to prepare them to be college and career ready and productive citizens in a competitive global economy.

3.1

The state assessment results reflect a mastery of student learning and attest to the alignment of the district's curriculum to state standards. District and school interviews, review of the artifacts and standards, and the superintendent's overview indicate that the curriculum provides students with challenging learning opportunities that develop the thinking and life skills that students need to achieve success at the next level. Course material is presented in innovative ways so that learning is equitable and accessible to all learners.

2. The district is committed to using data to drive all decisions to improve student achievement.

3.2

The district is committed to using data to drive all decisions to improve student achievement. Throughout the district, the commitment to data is evident by the use of data walls in every school. Data sources, including student achievement and progress monitoring data, attendance data, and discipline data are used to inform, plan instruction, differentiate instruction and improve learning to increase student achievement. Discussions about data occur regularly with adjustments made accordingly. These actions support the continuous improvement process.

3. Teachers collaborate as Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to analyze data and create instructional strategies that will improve student learning. 3.5

Interviews with staff and school leadership revealed that staff members participate in regularly scheduled vertical alignment meetings to ensure seamless curriculum. During these teaming meetings, staff members discuss curriculum across grade levels, content levels and building levels. A review of the Professional Development Plan revealed that professional development exists through a train the trainer model where teachers are coaching their peers about common core curriculum implementation, brain research and other district initiatives. Professional development occurs regularly across all jobs. In addition, informal discussions exist among colleagues regularly as they share best practices and instructional materials. PLC and the relationships they foster among educators have built a safe environment for teachers to share best practices and improve upon weaknesses and strengths promoting a culture that has produced high student achievement and many awards for the district.

4. Families are an integral part of the educational experience and welcomed in the districts decision-making and encouraged to participate in their student’s experiences. 3.8

Communication to families is a priority and evident through a variety of avenues to engage the families through website, Connect-Ed, e-mail, various parent programs, family nights, coffee talks, and other special times are designed to encourage participation. During interviews with parents and students and the review of artifacts at each site, data revealed that parents regularly volunteer in the school to support both teachers and students in achieving at high levels.

5. Professional development is valued and practiced district-wide among all district personnel. 3.11

Professional training is designed for specific personnel based on requests, surveys and data. As reported in interviews, if teachers desire help in particular areas, they receive prompt response from district personnel and school administrators to assist in their request. Teachers feel supported to grow in their instructional practices as they strive to attain a high level of expectation for their students to increase student achievement.

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems

Institutions, regardless of their size, need access to sufficient resources and systems of support to be able to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts that result in a continuous improvement cycle. Indeed, a study conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Pan, 2003) "demonstrated a strong relationship between resources and student success...both the level of resources and their explicit allocation seem to affect educational outcomes."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staffs who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

Standard			Standard Performance Level
The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			3.38
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Survey results •District budgets or financial plans for the last three years •Observations •District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools •Interviews •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 	3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Examples of school schedules •District quality assurance procedures showing district oversight of schools pertaining to school resources •Accreditation Report •Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources •Survey results •Examples of school calendars •Interviews •Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction •District strategic plan showing resources support for district 	3

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments•Interviews•Observations•Accreditation Report•Example systems for school maintenance requests•Survey results•Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments•Example maintenance schedules for schools•Example school records of depreciation of equipment	3
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	<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•Survey results•Interviews•Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments•Accreditation Report•Observations	4

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Evaluation procedures and results of education resources•Survey results•Interviews•Accreditation Report•District education delivery model intended for school implementation including media and information resources to support the education program•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	4
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<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•Survey results•District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level•District quality control procedures that monitor the effectiveness of technology services at the district-level and school-level•Assessments to inform development of district and school technology plans•Accreditation Report•Interviews•Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness•Examples of school-level technology plans and budgets to improve technology services and infrastructure to students and staff•Observations	3

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Interviews •Student assessment system for identifying student needs •Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support •Survey results •Accreditation Report •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 	4
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning •Survey results •Accreditation Report •Description of IEP process •District quality assurance procedures that monitor program effectiveness of student support services •Observations •Interviews •Description of referral process 	3

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The system has developed a purpose and direction that guides long-range planning and management of all resources. 4.4

Interviews with the superintendent and key central office personnel and review of artifacts including technology, fiscal and maintenance plans provided evidence of the district's strong commitment to effective strategic resources management. The district financial manager was named Business Manager of the Year, attesting to the astute and judicious use of available funds. While rebuilding after the destruction of Hurricanes Katrina and Isaac, specific short-term and long-term plans were formulated and disseminated. Personnel previously paid for with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Restart funds had to be added to the budget. Even with all the challenges facing the district, personnel continue to have a clear direction and purpose for the future and planning is guided by an extensive data collection. It was noted that more business involvement in writing grants would help provide necessary funding. For a school district to continue to improve and thrive in an atmosphere of budget cuts and declining revenue, strategic planning and effective management of all resources must be a priority.

2. Through interviews and classroom observations, the team saw evidence that the district provides both exceptional media resources and highly qualified personnel to assist students in retrieving information. 4.5

Updated technology is made available to media centers and classrooms. The Laura Bush Grant provided for a large collection of books, DVDs, and E-readers for one campus. The media collections provide opportunities for teachers and students to access information and utilize instructional software and videos. Students are provided with an extensive collection of books for independent reading. The team also learned that the majority of instructional materials are teacher-made and teachers have access to classroom sets of trade books to teach reading. It was noted that the shift to Common Core Standards would necessitate the need for more computers.

3. The district and individual schools spend much time in tracking and assessing students and striving to provide the necessary educational services. 4.7

As the superintendent stated in an interview, "We take our duty to our special education students very, very seriously." Evidence was seen of specialized programs and inclusion for not only struggling students, but also for the gifted, high achievers, and those who need to be on a career path. Counselors are available at each school, along with teachers and other personnel to ensure students are encouraged, motivated, challenged and remediated as necessary. Both parent and students indicated that the district offers challenging curricula, instruction and expectations. The team heard school administrators talk of tracking students from one level to another. A coach spoke of his efforts to know exactly where his athletes stood academically and doing whatever he could to keep them eligible to play. Data rooms provide a visual representation of an extensive collection of student data. For a district to continue to achieve excellence, it must ensure that each child reach his full potential.

Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Systems with strong improvement processes are moving beyond anxiety about the current reality and focusing on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, that is, data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, & Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembosky et al., 2005). The study also

identified six key strategies that performance-driven systems use: (1) building a foundation for data-driven decision making; (2) establishing a culture of data use and continuous improvement; (3) investing in an information management system; (4) selecting the right data; (5) building school capacity for data-driven decision making; and (6) analyzing and acting on data to improve performance. Other research studies, though largely without comparison groups, suggested that data-driven decision making has the potential to increase student performance (Alwin, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Lafee, 2002; McIntire, 2002).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine strategies to improve student performance. The institution implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained, and the institution demonstrates progress in improving student performance and institution effectiveness.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
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.		3.2	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model •Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols •Survey results •Interviews •Observations •Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness •Accreditation Report •Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free 	3

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning•Observations•Accreditation Report•List of data sources related to district effectiveness•Survey results•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•Interviews•List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning	3
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data•Documentation of attendance and training related to data use•Survey results•Interviews	3
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Policies and procedures specific to data use and training•Accreditation Report•Student surveys•Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data•Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning•Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans•Evidence of student success at the next level	3

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•District quality control procedures for monitoring district effectiveness•Accreditation Report•Survey results•Communication plan regarding student learning, systems that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders•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•Interviews	4
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Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The school leadership regularly and effectively communicates with stakeholders.

5.5

The school leadership regularly communicates with stakeholders through multiple formats. Evidence indicates frequent newsletters, notes and brochures to consistently inform parents concerning upcoming events, curriculum updates, student learning, and school improvement efforts. Email communications vary in different degrees of depth and breadth to meet the needs of all stakeholders. Some information is technical in nature and others are brief updates. During interviews, stakeholders applauded leadership for the consistency of communication that allows them to feel involved while outside the building. Leadership provides opportunities for parents to be well-informed partners in their child's' education. School leaders are active in civic organizations to keep community members current on school events and news. A newly designed and functional website was highly praised by parent groups. Regular and effective communication by school leaders helps create a positive result in student grades, test scores and graduation rates. Providing stakeholders and a school community with accurate facts about a school and district leads to effective and successful education for all students.

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. Develop and integrate a systematic plan to analyze data to drive classroom instruction and determine professional development training in data interpretation and use.

5.4

The External Review Team found evidence that data are being collected in an exemplary manner. The school data rooms contain a wealth of data information and used extensively by staff. However, it was revealed through teacher interviews that inconsistent methods are used for reporting data among staff and between schools. Providing a systematic plan for all schools to use in analyzing and reporting data would improve data analysis and classroom instruction.

Learning Environment

Every learner should have access to an effective learning environment in which she/he has multiple opportunities to be successful. The Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and well-managed. An environment where high expectations are the norm and active learning takes place. It measures whether learners' progress is monitored and feedback is provided and the extent to which technology is leveraged for learning.

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. External review team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a 4 point scale with 4=very evident, 3=evident, 2=somewhat evident, and 1=not observed. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the 7 learning environments included in ELEOT.

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool

<i>Environments</i>	<i>Level</i>
A. Equitable Learning Environment	3.1
B. High Expectations Environment	3.5
C. Supportive Learning Environment	3.6
D. Active Learning Environment	3.4
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	3.4
F. Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.3
G. Digital Learning Environment	1.5

Part II: Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

The Pass Christian Mississippi School District External Review was conducted in Pass Christian, Mississippi, on February 17-20, 2013. The five member team found the school system had prepared an excellent Self-Assessment on the five Standards, an Executive Summary and Improvement Plans. The workroom at the central office had artifacts neatly presented in files labeled by indicators. Office personnel were available to answer questions or present additional information as requested by the team. The four schools visited were prepared for the External Review team and were informed on the process and visitation. All schools had well documented school improvement plans and pertinent documents readily available for the team. Parents, teachers, staff and students were cooperative and well prepared for the visit. The visitation included 28 classroom observations. The team met in interview sessions with all school principals and interviewed or had direct contact with 90 stakeholders. Contacts included interviews, one on one conversations, oral presentations, and group discussions. The participants included 18 administrators, three board members, 25 teachers, 35 students, 10 parents, and one community member.

Hotel accommodations were excellent. Holiday Inn Express, Long Beach provided a conference room with screen, LCD projector provided by the district, internet access in every area, and unlimited printing. Team members were impressed by the hospitality shown by the district and hotel staff.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. All Standards and the indicators in each of the Standards were verified and met by the the school district. Pass Christian Public School District (PCSD) has earned the reputation as a premier school district in the state and nation. Two schools have earned the National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award -one in year 2005 and the other in 2012. The most notable achievement comes in the form of student achievement. The district has been ranked as the number one school district in the state for four years by the Mississippi State Board of Education. Other achievements include the Lighthouse School Leader Beacon Award 2000-2012, and the Research and Evaluation of Public School Value Added Award for performing significantly better than other schools with comparable socioeconomic circumstances. All schools have been recognized as high achieving schools including Star School designation awards for the past four years, Highest Performing Reward School on the 2012 Federal Accountability Model, and Pass Christian High School recognized by US News and World Report as one of the best high schools in the nation for the past four years.

The visit validated several Powerful Practices. Some of the practices and common themes that emerged

during the visit revealed that the school and system leadership teams are respected and viewed as caring educators by stakeholders. Most notable comments were those pertaining to the hands on approach of school and system leaders to the needs of teachers and students creating a culture by all staff that embodies shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning. Attention to the systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success is a notable strength of the district. The district policies and practices provide clear requirements, direction for and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system creating a sense of pride and security for all in the school district. The curriculum offers rigorous opportunities for all students to prepare them to be college and career ready and productive citizens in a competitive global economy. The district is committed to using data to drive all decisions to improve student achievement. Teachers collaborate as Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to analyze data and create instructional strategies that will improve student learning. Professional development is valued and practiced district-wide amongst all district personnel. Families are an integral part of the educational experience and welcomed in the district's decision-making and encouraged to participate in their student's experiences.

Areas noted as possibilities for improvement centered on three main ideas. One, requiring a documented and systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning at all schools. Secondly, there is the perception in the community and among staff that board members may be too involved in the daily contact with teachers/staff of the schools. A clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the board as a unit and as individual board members should improve confusion and the perceptions of board interference in administrative roles and responsibilities. Third, in order to improve the data usage in the schools, using a systematic process in data collection and usage in all schools would provide better understanding and use of data between and among the schools.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

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The External Review team visited 28 classrooms looking holistically through the eyes of the students and their experiences in the classroom. The team's purpose was to identify and document observable evidence of classroom environments that are conducive to student learning. The team validated the reports that there is a well-managed learning environment in the schools and classrooms. Students knew procedures and quickly began work when prompted by the teacher. The team witnessed students actively engaged in project-based learning, playing games to reinforce lesson content, peer coaching, and one on one instruction. Open classroom discussions and encouragement of students by students and teachers were noted in most classrooms. Students were shown how to correct concepts that were not mastered

and had opportunities to improve work based on feedback from peers and the teacher.

The technology resources available to the teachers and students were used inconsistently in the learning process. The team did not see consistent student engagement in the use of technology to enhance their learning. The teachers used PowerPoint presentations and SMART Boards but student engagement with the technology was minimal. The school has technology and infrastructure available to provide a more rich technology experience for the students. During the team's observations teachers were implementing technology tools as a replacement for dry erase boards but not as a learning tool to enhance the academic understanding of students.

The External Review Team commends the school system for working so diligently on providing complete and thorough information for the team to review. The system is so committed to the AdvancED process that each summer since 2007 the Leadership Team meets in a "retreat setting" to work exclusively on AdvancED updates and review.

It is with great enthusiasm that the External Review Team recommends that Pass Christian Schools be granted a new five-year term for accreditation. The team would like to thank the entire school community for the warm welcome and hospitality shown throughout the visit.

Required Actions

1. Develop and implement a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experiences and acts as a mentor.

Primary Indicator or Assurance: 3.9

As reported by stakeholders in interviews and district personnel, mentors are available on an as-needed only basis. School personnel indicated that they are working on developing a formalized program that will address having an adult assigned to every student to build rapport, relationships and serve to hold students accountable for their own success. In the advent of student population increases due to the influx of new students in the system as reported by the school leadership and teachers, new students can truly benefit from an adult mentor to support them as they become acclimated to the school culture. All students will benefit from the support provided through an adult mentor in their efforts to become college and career ready in a rapidly changing global economy.

2. Evaluate the feasibility of expanding the use of digital technology in the schools and classrooms.

Primary Indicator or Assurance: 4.6

The district has a technology plan in place and equipment is available for student and staff use. Schools have up to date computers in labs and classrooms. However, students, parents and staff indicate there are limitations on students' use of personal digital equipment in classrooms. Students were seriously concerned that they were at a disadvantage with the limited use of technology in their classroom. To compete globally with other students with more access to technology tools and digital media, students must be able to instantly access and use these tools to conduct research, solve problems, and gather and evaluate information.

Part III: Addenda

Next Steps

The institution 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 Powerful Practices section to maximize their impact on the institution.
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 institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the Team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

In 2006, the 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), both founded in 1895, along with the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (founded 1917) joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students. The Northwest Accreditation Commission joined the AdvancED network in 2011.

External Review

Pass Christian Public School District

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.