

Standard 1

Vision & Purpose

STANDARD:

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

IMPACT STATEMENT:

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

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
1.1	Establishes a vision for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders			X	
1.2	Communicates the system’s vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support			X	
1.3	Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision				X
1.4	Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community			X	
1.5	Ensures that the system’s vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services			X	
1.6	Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate				X

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

- Leadership demonstrates stakeholder support

- Mission Statement visible throughout the district
- Policies/Procedures manuals/handbooks demonstrating stakeholder involvement in development of mission
- Stakeholder perception data used to develop mission
- Stakeholders are knowledgeable about vision, mission
- Strategic Plans include mission
- Vision, mission statements include all elements of stakeholder inclusion

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Handbooks include vision, mission
- Meetings incorporate elements of vision, mission
- Newsletters include vision, mission
- Signage includes vision, mission
- Stakeholders are knowledgeable about vision, mission
- Website/page includes vision, mission

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- District and school improvement planning incorporates vision, mission
- District Improvement Plan includes vision, mission
- Goals distributed through publications and communication
- Goals that are data-driven and measurable
- Stakeholders demonstrate involvement in and knowledge of goal setting
- Strategic Plan includes vision, mission
- Strategic planning incorporates vision, mission

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Annual Report
- Community-based data
- District Improvement Plan
- District profile is used during parent/community meetings
- District profile is used during staff meetings
- Newsletters, articles
- Publications, brochures, handbooks
- Stakeholders demonstrate knowledge of District profile

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- District and school improvement planning demonstrates alignment with vision, mission
- District Curriculum demonstrates alignment with vision, mission
- District Improvement Plan demonstrates alignment of vision, mission with teaching and learning
- Extra -curricular activities incorporate vision, mission
- Staff and Parent Handbooks demonstrate alignment of vision, mission with teaching and learning
- Strategic Plan demonstrates alignment of vision, mission and teaching and learning
- Student report cards demonstrate alignment with vision, mission

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- Strategic Plan demonstrates review
- Strategic planning process demonstrates review by stakeholders

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

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

The vision of the St. Clair County School System is to be recognized as one of Alabama's premiere systems by providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum which will enable all students to graduate from high school and be successful in the 21st century. Prior to the beginning of school each year, the school district analyzes its vision and mission. Data from the previous year's performance is evaluated and used to modify, revise, and improve the actual performance of the system's vision and mission.

"Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders Today," the St. Clair County School System slogan is prominently displayed in each of the schools in the district and on the system website. All literature published for the system, such as student and employee handbooks, contains the vision and mission statements. The vision of the system is reinforced and celebrated each year at the annual St. Clair County Institute meeting with all system employees present. At this time there is a renewed focus and commitment for implementation of the vision and purpose for our system.

Every school year ends with a meeting of each school's Continuous Improvement team to reflect on the district vision and its impact on the previous year. This team consists of staff, parents, and community leaders. In this meeting, the vision of the system is reviewed and suggestions for revisions are made. During the summer local Continuous Improvement teams meet to analyze data and use this information to set new goals for improvement. During designated parenting days, local school open house celebrations and community functions, the system's vision is communicated to all stakeholders.

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

The St. Clair County School System continuously analyzes data and academic progress of its students. This information is used to revise and set goals for the district Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) each year. Each school in the district also monitors the academic progress of its students throughout the year. All schools have a Continuous Improvement team that consists of staff, parents, and community leaders. This team analyzes data specific to each school and uses it to develop the school's CIP in response to student performance, school climate, and specific professional needs. These plans integrate various types of information such as attendance, academic performance, drop out rates, PRIDE surveys, formal assessment data (Alabama High School Graduation Exam, SAT 10, Alabama Reading and Math Test, DIBELS, etc.), and discipline records. Upon completion, these plans give an excellent profile of the needs of the schools, as well as the positive results of currently employed improvement strategies. These plans are approved at the central office level and are available for inspection there, as well as at the local school and their websites. All of the CIP's contain measurable goals which are reviewed on a monthly basis by the CIP teams and central office personnel to ensure implementation.

The St. Clair County School System, as well as all of the local schools, maintains websites that help to describe and promote the system's vision and mission as well as its programs, services, and performance. These websites are similar in format and are updated on a regular basis to disseminate system and school information to all stakeholder groups. In addition, the Superintendent publishes a monthly newsletter online and in print that serves to provide these groups with additional information about the system, its performance and the achievement of system-wide goals. State guidelines are followed for posting standardized test reports, parent information and stakeholder meetings.

The St. Clair County School System publishes each year student and employee handbooks. These documents provide valuable information concerning the district's policies, services, and programs. In addition, each individual school develops their own student and parent handbook that address not only system policies, but also those unique to the individual school. Publications, such as brochures, are updated annually to reflect changes in policies, student performance data and demographics.

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

Each summer the district conducts a two day administrative retreat for central office and school administrators. The purpose of the retreat is to improve communication, analyze data, review CIP's and to conduct horizontal and vertical planning. Following the retreat the information gathered is taken by the school administrators back to the local schools. With a framework of the system's vision, as well as any revised purpose and goals, the Continuous School Improvement team is reassembled, and data from the local school is analyzed. The vision, goals, and purpose of the system are combined with those of the school to produce a plan for success that is analyzed and modified when needed throughout the year.

A team of central office personnel is assigned to monitor the progress of each school's CIP and to offer input and support for the implementation. At the local level, data meetings are held on at least a monthly basis to determine goal progression and areas of weakness. If goals are in danger of not being met the central office

team works with the school's CIP team to revise methods and develop additional strategies for success. The Continuous Improvement Plan is the embodiment of the school's, and therefore the system's, vision, purpose, and goals. Effective leadership is evident in the success of the CIP.

Other administrative actions that ensure that the purpose and goals are being met for the school system include: Professional Learning Communities, monthly Principal and Coordinators meetings, professional development leadership training for administrators, and participation in the Educate Alabama, and Alabama Professional Learning Collaborative. Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT), end of assessment data meetings and walkthrough visits are conducted to identify strategies and areas for improvement, for accountability and for quality assurance.

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

Each year the administrative team, composed of central office staff, principals and teachers, of the St. Clair County School System meets to analyze data, evaluate the system vision, and participate in professional development. During this gathering, administrators meet, not only as a whole, but also within their grade level counterparts, and again finally across grade level lines to aid in vertical and horizontal alignment. In these conversations, action steps are developed for carrying out the purpose, vision and mission of the system as well as methods for determining success. By varying the composition of the members meeting together, administrators at one level (i.e.: middle school) can be more aware of the problems and recommended solutions presented by administrators at another level (i.e.: high school). Through this collaborative dialogue, the vision and purpose of the system are being kept in constant alignment with system expectations.

In individual communities, local school leadership meets, together with community and parent leaders, on a regular basis (quarterly) to discuss situations unique to that community. By discussing the Continuous Improvement Plan and pointing out needs to these individuals, schools can often obtain solutions to problems that would otherwise be unavailable, such as funding for needed programs. By working together, school and community leaders maximize the possibility of school success.

Due to the fact that most schools in the St. Clair County School System are accredited by the Advance-Ed, the school system is better able to remain aligned with current research and public expectations. The school district provides professional development, training, and support in research based strategies and interventions in order to assist schools in continuing to meet Advance-Ed standards. As goals are met, new goals are created. Local schools, in their Advance-Ed reviews, conduct extensive internal reviews to not only ensure compliance to the standards, but also to ensure success in maximizing student potential.

Overall Assessment: Operational

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

Standard 2

Governance & Leadership

STANDARD:

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

IMPACT STATEMENT:

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

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system operates under the jurisdiction of a governing authority that:					
2.1	Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system				X
2.2	Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system				X
2.3	Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations				X
2.4	Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board				X
2.5	Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources				X
2.6	Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations				X
2.7	Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations				X
In fulfillment of this standard, the system has leadership that:					

2.8	Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness			X	
2.9	Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs			X	
2.10	Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals			X	
2.11	Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership			X	
2.12	Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction			X	
2.13	Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel			X	

2.1 Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system :	Highly Functional
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Evidence Provided:

- Agendas, minutes of governing authority meetings
- District-wide Staff and/or student handbooks
- Governance Policy handbooks: board, district, school
- Governing authority affirms understanding of their role in the operation of the school/district
- Local, state, and federal policy handbooks
- Organizational chart
- Procedural policies: emergencies, contact information, calling tree, discipline, due process, logistics, placement and transfer
- Staff and students affirm their understanding of emergency and operational procedures
- Stakeholders affirm understanding of operational procedures
- Students and staff affirm their understanding of discipline policies and due process

2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system:	Highly Functional
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Evidence Provided:

- District staff are knowledgeable about leadership prerogatives
- District staff are knowledgeable about organizational chart
- District staff demonstrate knowledge about due process
- Governing Board Policies demonstrate leadership prerogatives
- Organizational chart
- Policies demonstrate protocols for remediation and due process

- Roles and responsibilities of governing board, advisory councils, and ad hoc committees are clearly outlined

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- District staff are knowledgeable about curriculum standards
- District staff demonstrates knowledge and use of curriculum standards in the teaching and learning process
- District staff responsible for the implementation of state and/or federal programs are knowledgeable about compliance
- Documentation of adherence to ethical business practices
- Documentation of compliance with all regulations regarding copyright law, intellectual property, and international restrictions
- Documentation of State and Federal Compliances and Assurances, including NCLB/Title I, EEO, Title IX
- Documentation of utilization of all requirement elements of curriculum standards
- Documentation with all regulations that apply to accreditation by NCA CASI, SACS CASI, or AdvancED
- Stakeholders affirm compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity practices and procedures
- Stakeholders affirm compliance with ethical business practices
- Stakeholders are involved in the establishment and monitoring of adherence to all regulations

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- District staff and governing board members affirm their knowledge of governing board policies and procedures
- District staff and governing board members affirm their participation in orientation and training
- Policies and procedures for governing board training and orientation
- Roles and responsibilities of governing board, advisory councils, and ad hoc committees are clearly outlined

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- Documentation of adherence to ethical business practices
- Policies and procedures for fiscal planning: short-term and long-range
- Stakeholders affirm compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity practices and procedures
- Stakeholders affirm compliance with ethical business practices

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

Evidence Provided:

- District staff are knowledgeable about due process and complaint resolution
- District staff are knowledgeable about access to legal counsel
- Documentation of access to legal counsel
- Documentation of resolutions of any complaints
- Staff and students affirm their involvement in the accreditation process

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

Evidence Provided:

- District staff affirm knowledge and support for the district's fiscal responsibility
- District staff affirm knowledge of district's insurance carrier, policies, and procedures
- Policies and procedures for investments
- Policies and procedures for protecting assets and financial resources

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

Evidence Provided:

- Advisory Committee: agenda, minutes
- District staff affirm the use of student performance and organizational effectiveness data for planning
- District Staff meetings: agenda, minutes, decision points
- Evaluation results: professional development, efficiency, effectiveness, instructional programming, etc.
- Record of student performance data analysis
- Staff and students affirm their involvement in the accreditation process
- Student database management system
- Student performance data are used during district staff meetings
- Student performance data are used for extra-curricular planning
- Student performance database for formative assessments

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

Evidence Provided:

- Accreditation team members are representative of staff and students
- Artifacts displayed throughout the district demonstrate inclusion of all stakeholder communities

- Calendar, agendas, minutes of stakeholder meetings
- Committee members are representative of all stakeholder groups
- Parent/community compacts
- Policies for staff/student leadership opportunities outside the district environment
- Record of Advisory Committees: calendars, membership, minutes
- Record of co-curricular organizations and activities: calendars, membership, sponsors
- Stakeholder survey data
- Stakeholders affirm a sense of belonging and engagement
- Stakeholders affirm that leadership hears and acts upon their suggestions and recommendations
- Stakeholders affirm their involvement in a district-wide decision-making process
- Stakeholders affirm their involvement in the accreditation process
- Stakeholders affirm their involvement on committees
- Website provides forum for feedback and dialogue

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Budget reflects allocation of support for student performance targets
- District staff are knowledgeable about student performance targets
- District staff are knowledgeable about the alignment of resources to support student performance
- District-wide walk-about demonstrate monitoring of instructional practices
- Guidelines outline expectations for instructional standards
- Guidelines outline expectations for student performance
- Organizational chart reflects allocation of support for student performance targets

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Accreditation team members are representative of stakeholder groups
- Calendar, agendas, minutes of stakeholder meetings
- Committee members are representative of all stakeholder groups
- Parent/community compacts
- Policies and procedures established for the inclusion of all stakeholders into appropriate district-wide decision making processes
- Stakeholders affirm their involvement in a district-wide decision-making process
- Stakeholders affirm their involvement on committees

2.12 Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction:**Operational**

Evidence Provided:

- Artifacts displayed throughout the district demonstrate inclusion of all stakeholder communities
- District staff are knowledgeable about the results of a community satisfaction survey
- Record of Advisory Committees: calendars, membership, minutes
- Stakeholder survey data
- Stakeholders affirm their satisfaction with their level of involvement

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

Evidence Provided:

- District staff are knowledgeable about access to and participation in a professional growth program
- District staff are knowledgeable about the criteria, timeline, process, procedures, and dispositions by which they will be evaluated
- Documentation of salary schedules
- Handbooks demonstrate staff evaluation system
- New staff orientation materials
- Policies demonstrate evaluation criteria, timelines, and termination processes
- Policies demonstrate professional growth opportunities
- Professional development plan for all staff

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

The St. Clair County Board of Education adopts all policies for the district upon the recommendation of the superintendent. The policies of the St. Clair County Board of Education, as set forth in the local policy manual, guide the procedures of both the system and the schools operation. The superintendent, principals, assistant principals, and teachers oversee the procedural operation of the district. Input from stakeholders (central office personnel, administrators, teachers, parents, community members, counselors, out of system consultants, etc.) is sought concerning policy revisions and additions. The St. Clair County Board of Education approves or amends any revisions.

Policy revisions and additions are communicated to school administrators and are placed in the St. Clair County School Board Policy Manual. A copy of the Policy Manual is placed in each individual school's office and media center and is available for public access. Policy revisions and additions are communicated to teachers through updates in faculty meetings and memorandums. These revisions and additions are added, when applicable, to the St. Clair County Schools Employee Handbook which is updated annually. Representatives from local newspapers attend Board meetings and report policy updates and other Board minutes in the local newspapers.

The St. Clair County School System utilizes policies and procedures which are established, communicated and implemented which result in the effective operation of the school district. Policies and procedures are communicated to stakeholders via newspaper, employee handbook, student handbook, system and school websites, newsletters, memorandums, and oral communication.

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

A variety of evaluation tools are utilized by the St. Clair County School System to measure the effectiveness of the system and the impact on student learning. Analysis of test data is completed at the system level and at the school level. Test data analysis includes but is not limited to: the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) for grades 9-12; the Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing (ADAW) for grades 5, 7, and 10; the Alabama Alternative Assessment (AAA) designated for students in special education; the Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT) for grades 3-8; the Stanford 10 (SAT 10) for grades 3-8; the Alabama Science Assessment (ASA) for grades 5 and 7; Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) for grades K-3; and Discovery Education (Think Link) for grades 3-8. Results of data analysis are disseminated. The system's Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), goals and plan for instruction are driven by the results of data analysis. Each school's Continuous Improvement Plan, goals and instruction are also driven by the results of data analysis.

Results of data analysis are presented and made available to stakeholders at each individual school. The St. Clair County Board of Education is presented with data analysis and approves the system's CIP. Progress reports are sent home at midterm of each nine week period, and report cards are sent home at the end of each nine week period. Students who may be identified as at-risk receive additional assistance via classroom interventions, tutoring, counseling, intervention programs, and may be referred to the Response To Intervention Team (RTI). Data meetings are held at the individual school level and at the system level. Administrators, teachers, and students understand, acknowledge, and are held accountable for high stakes summative tests as well as formal and informal assessments at both the individual student and group levels. Formal and informal observations and instructional walkthroughs are conducted throughout the school year. Measurement of instructional effectiveness, student performance, peer feedback, peer coaching, and professional sharing are results of these observations and walkthroughs. Parent, student, stakeholder, and teacher surveys are conducted throughout the school year in order to provide diverse evaluative measurements of the school system's effectiveness.

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

The St. Clair County School System has developed a climate of collaboration within the district and community and strives to maintain this excellent working relationship. District and school leaders promote the mission and goals of the system and schools. Faculty and staff are encouraged to serve on decision-making committees such as the CIP team, policy-making committees, Code of Conduct and district handbook committees. Faculty meetings and data meetings are held regularly at each individual school. Each school has a committee which solicits faculty input and helps develop the school's Continuous Improvement Plan. Grade level and across grade level meetings are held to align and discuss subject matter, progress, and goals for the future. Stakeholders provide leadership and input at the system level via involvement on policy, calendar, textbook, handbook and other committees.

Stakeholders provide leadership and input at the individual school level via RTI, data teams, CIP, and budget committees. Eleven certified employees serve at the central office level. These employees provide oversight via on-going program monitoring, providing technical assistance, facilitating professional development, participating in data analysis, conducting school observations, conducting surveys, and monitoring Continuous Improvement Plans. One form of evaluating measures is to include parent, student, and teacher surveys which are conducted to give a diverse picture of school effectiveness. A parent representative serves on the CIP committee at each school. Each individual school adheres to board policy and elects an Advisory Council Team (ACT) to represent each school community on local and district level committees. This team consists of three members who are community stakeholders, who are elected by the community, and who serve two year terms.

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

It is the policy of the St. Clair County School System that no person be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of sex, race, religion, handicap, belief, national origin, age, or ethnic group. The St. Clair County School System is committed to an equitable learning environment for all of its students. The district abides by state and federal mandated laws as they relate to students and student services. The system complies within these guidelines and therefore meets the needs of the IDEA, Title I, EL, Gifted and 504 students. The St. Clair County Board of Education, Superintendent, and Chief Financial Officer work diligently to plan and budget so that all schools are provided equitable resources, state of the art technologies, materials, and resources. The St. Clair County School System provides professional development and training for faculty members on innovative strategies and ensuring equity in learning. Individual schools are funded on a per pupil basis. Per pupil funding provides equity of both human and material resources. Equitable learning opportunities are provided to all students in all schools. Each student is considered in developing the curriculum and the CIP. Heterogeneous classroom groupings ensure that students are placed in mixed classrooms by gender, ability, ethnicity, and other factors and that no students are isolated on the basis of differences. Enrichment opportunities such as library and computer classes are offered at each elementary school. No limitations such as race, gender or academic ability are placed on any student which might hinder participation in enrichment classes. The system also offers a state approved at-risk program, fully staffed special education services, Title I services, summer programs in reading and math, summer migrant program and distance learning (ACCESS).

Overall Assessment: Highly Functional

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

Standard 3

Teaching & Learning

STANDARD:

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

IMPACT STATEMENT:

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

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
3.1	Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly- defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills			X	
3.2	Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning			X	
3.3	Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels			X	
3.4	Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice			X	
3.5	Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity			X	
3.6	Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning			X	
3.7	Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment			X	
3.8	Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning			X	
3.9	Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning			X	
3.10	Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals			X	
3.11	Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction			X	

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Communication of NCLB performance targets
- Curriculum pacing guides
- District staff can articulate student learning expectations
- District staff/others meet regularly to discuss student progress and remediation
- District staff/others meetings highlight discussions of student learning expectations
- District-wide curriculum committee: review cycle, adoption/approval policies/criteria, membership
- District-wide master schedule; hours of instruction
- Formative assessments: quarterlies, etc.
- Graphs, charts, displays of student learning goals
- Policies on grading criteria
- Policy on credit requirements for program completion
- Special program promotion, completion requirements
- Staff can articulate curriculum sequencing and grouping
- Student Handbook outlines student learning expectations
- Students affirm their knowledge of what is expected of them
- Syllabi or course catalogues
- Textbooks and text selection criteria are aligned to learning goals, curriculum

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Course syllabi outlining criteria for student involvement
- Samples of student work
- Student mentoring programs
- Students affirm their involvement in their own learning

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Assessment data
- District staff/others can identify research used to align instruction
- District staff/others meet to analyze data and align instruction
- District staff/others meet to review current research

- District staff/others meetings regularly include data analysis
- Grade reports
- Professional development calendar and topics
- Surveys
- Transcripts, certificates

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

Evidence provided:

- Agendas, minutes of staff/grade level/department/program meetings
- Cross-content curriculum guides
- District staff/others meet to share best practices
- District staff/others meetings regularly include discussions about effective instructional design and delivery
- Guidance that promotes a variety of instructional design and delivery strategies
- Professional development plans
- Professional learning opportunities focus on best practice instruction
- Professional organization membership
- Student portfolios

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

Evidence Provided:

- Curriculum includes attention to diversity
- District staff are knowledgeable about state and national curriculum standards
- District staff are representative of the school and community demographics
- Graduation requirements
- Master schedule
- Policies that reflect attention to issues of equity
- Promotion, graduation criteria
- Standards-based curriculum: state and national standards
- Students affirm that there are opportunities to excel

3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning:
Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Instructional calendar: days, hours
- Lesson plans are followed during teacher absence
- Master schedule
- Policies and guidelines that demonstrate that all program requirements are met

- Policies demonstrate that substitute teachers are responsible for delivery instruction
- Staff affirm that their instructional time is protected
- There are few instructional interruptions: PA system, visitors, etc.

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Articulation agreements between agencies
- Policies and guidelines granting dual-credit, transfer of credit

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- After-school programs
- Community-based programs
- Counseling programs: curriculum, schedules, staffing
- District staff affirm that there are multiple opportunities for students to get support
- Individualized Development/Career Plans
- Online support
- Schedule of opportunities, activities that support special learning needs
- Students affirm that they have opportunities to explore their interests and career options
- Students affirm that they have opportunities to get support for their school experience
- Supplemental educational services: NCLB tutorial

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Database of student behavioral incidents
- District staff affirm that they are involved in promoting positive school climate
- District staff/others meetings provide time for discussions about climate
- Parents/community indicate that the school/district focuses on positive school/district climate
- Peer intervention programs; peer counseling
- Policies for student behavior, remediation, due process, appeals
- Reward system for positive behavior
- Stakeholder Compact: adult and student expectations
- Stakeholder satisfaction survey data
- Students affirm that they are involved in promoting positive school climate

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

Evidence Provided:

- Budget allocating appropriate funds for media services
- Calendar and schedule of media services to students
- District staff affirm the use of media services in the development of curriculum and instructional programs
- Facilities map indicating media services location
- Labor agreement that outlines media services responsibilities
- Media services staff demonstrate the use media resources to support student achievement
- Staffing chart demonstrating allocation of appropriate media staff
- Students and staff affirm their involvement in media services program

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

Evidence Provided:

- Budget allocating appropriate funds for technology - software, hardware, and infrastructure
- Calendar and schedule of technology services to students
- District staff affirm that technology supports their curriculum and instructional programs
- Facilities map indicating technology services/lab
- Staffing chart demonstrating allocation of appropriate technology staff
- Students and staff affirm that technology is embedded within the teaching and learning process
- Technology staff/services demonstrate their involvement in support of student achievement

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

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

A framework for providing a highly effective curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments is a continuous cycle within the St. Clair County School System. This continuous cycle flows from system committees to the schools. The system-wide administrative learning community utilizes the Response to Instruction best practices model, as well as the local school on-site reading coach support through professional learning communities. Professional learning communities are encouraged at each school, grade level, and collaboration content areas meetings. Professional learning planning has included training in the following:

- Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI)
- Harcourt Reading
- Alabama-Math- Science-Technology Initiative (AMSTI)
- Discovery Education
- Response to Instruction Best Practices Framework

- Power of “I”
- Problem Solving Team
- APEX
- USA Test Prep
- ACCESS (distance learning)
- Career Cruising
- Moodle
- Web quests
- Mentoring sessions

The district aligns goals and initiatives with the overall vision and mission of the school system. Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) are developed by the district and the individual schools after a committee initiates a needs assessment audit. Additionally, the St. Clair County School System has established a pacing guide committee comprised of teacher representatives from schools in our district. The committee analyzes curriculum that is guided by the Alabama Course of Study, encompassing the national standards, research based grade appropriate standards, and state reform initiatives. The school system has also established a district wide instructional leadership team to provide a 12K approach to supporting quality instruction. The 12K approach is intended to design a seamless curriculum for graduates of school systems which communicate clear expectations. Summative assessments are used to measure student achievement. Some are as follows:

- Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE)
- Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA)
- Alabama Science Assessment (ASA)
- AdvancED Standards Assessment Report Page 34 of 76
- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
- Stanford Achievement Test (SAT 10)
- Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT)

Central office personnel, administrators, counselors, and faculty work collaboratively to disaggregate data and the data is used to improve, adjust and monitor strategies and assessments at the district and local school level. The St. Clair County School System value the use of formative assessments which benchmark student progress along the way. Here are samples of those assessments:

- Discovery Education (Think Link)
- Progress Monitoring
- DIBELS
- Exit Slips
- Unit Assessments
- Theme Assessments
- Teacher Anecdotal Notes
- Program assessments

These assessments provide school leaders with data in which to lead data meetings for the purpose of changing instruction based on formative data results. Some schools have begun aligning curriculum and assessments horizontally and vertically. Intervention strategies as well as strategies for higher level learners and

differentiated instruction are incorporated into daily lessons and assessments. Administrators and reading coaches of local schools use peer observations, workshops, book studies, planning sessions, instructional modeling, peer conferencing and reflection opportunities to streamline instructional approaches. The district leadership support team along with the Superintendent, local school administrators and supportive reading coaches conduct walkthroughs to support the implementation of quality instructional strategies and provide professional feedback to teachers in order to improve instruction and close achievement gaps.

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

The St. Clair County School System promotes and supports effective instructional practices through the utilization of the Professional Learning Community sessions. As state assessment results are released, teams of educators established at the school level meet with the superintendent and continuous improvement specialist to study data, discover strengths and weaknesses, and develop research-based strategies, practices and action plans to correct weaknesses. The school team communicates to the teachers, staff, parents, and advisory council how strengths and weaknesses will be addressed throughout the year.

Professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators are provided to expand knowledge of specialty areas with opportunities for job embedded support and follow up. The purpose of the Professional Learning Community is to help support instructional needs and provide opportunities to collaboratively discuss instructional best practices that can be implemented in the schools. The intervention materials that are utilized by teachers are often funded with federal funds, local funds, and grants. The district is dedicated to providing quality professional development with follow up support in the areas where weaknesses are identified by formative and summative data sources. The district prepares to ensure the teachers have the resources they need in the classroom to provide high instruction. The district is committed to doing “whatever it takes” to increase reading in all core AdvancED Standards Assessment subjects, engage students in all classes, and increase awareness of the special education students’ academic goals.

Evidence

- Alabama Reading Initiative -K-6 - Provides teachers training using scientifically researched based approaches to help use best instructional practices, specifically in phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary and fluency - DIBELS, ARI, Evaluations, Walkthroughs
- Harcourt Intervention Station - Primary Intervention - Provides reading intervention that promotes students’ ability to decode words, read fluently and comprehend text - Observation, Participation, Corrective Reading, Assessments
- Alabama Math, Science, Technology Initiative - K-12 - Provides intensive training for teachers to improve instruction in math and science for all students to be successful in the workforce - Observation, Monitoring, Standardized Test Scores
- Discovery Education - 3rd -8th - Provides web-based interactive learning paths for students based on assessment results - Observation, Reports
- STAR/AR Reading and Math - K-6 - Assesses student reading levels and gives a zone of proximity development of range of reading level - Observation, Reports
- Voyager - K-5 - Comprehensive reading intervention that combines research based instruction to meet needs of

all students - Observation, Reports

- Singapore Math - K-2 - Emphasis the development of story number sense, excellent mental math skills and deep understanding of place value - Observation, Participation, Standardized Test Scores
- Response to Instruction - K-12 - A III Tiered instructional framework which promotes differentiated integrated system benefiting all student populations in providing high quality instruction, re-teaching and intervention matched to students' academic, social, emotional, behavioral needs - Increased academic achievement
- Problem Solving Team - K-12 - The Problem Solving Team provides intervention strategies for students in general education that are at risk of failing due to academics/ behavior - Documentation of student academic performance and behavior
- Power of "I" - 1st-8th - Grading practices that eliminate zeros, get students to complete assignments at a higher level and establish a culture that does not allow a student to fail - Assessments, Peer Coaching
- Multiple Teaching Systems - K-12 - Integrated instructional software system that includes both curriculum and management components designed around best practices for individual instruction based on each student's achievement level - Participation, Observation
- ACCESS - 9th-12th - Provides opportunities and options for Alabama public high school students to engage in Advance Placement, electives or other courses which may not be available on site - Broader curriculum and advanced diplomas
- Career Cruising - 8th-12th - Provides an academic curriculum in thematic units that gives students a vision into the future and focuses on goal setting career exploration - Increased academic achievement in reading, math and graduation rate
- USA Test Prep - 9th-12th - Provides students with review of all parts of the AHSGE - AHSGE results
- E-School - 9th-12th - Provides credit recovery for those students who have failed a course and also can be used as remediation - Online Program, Reports
- APEX - 6 -12 - Increases access to high quality educational alternatives for all students through online learning Online Program, Reports
- Moodle - K-12 - Software package for producing internet based courses and web sites - Participation in on-line Learning
- Teacher Mentoring Target Group and Grade Level - K-12 -Guidance in areas of lesson planning, management and organization - Professional Learning Community Meetings, Standardized Test Scores
- Pre-K Program - Four Year Old - Provides foundational skills in the areas of reading and math which enhances success and provides quality early childhood experiences. Participation/Early Intervention Inventories/Pre-K Assessments
- ICademy- Jefferson State Community College Collaboration - High School - Provides students with technical skills in order to address workforce development and dual enrollment possibilities for students desiring extended technical training. Industry Standards Assessments/Jefferson State Community College Assessments
- JROTC - High School - Provides students with character education programs that helps with decision making, self esteem, achievement and overall academic performance. JROTC Drill Completions/Assessments/Standards Based Assessments

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

In meeting the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the district believes that all faculty should be Highly

Qualified (HQ). To ensure that all personnel are well-prepared to effectively implement the district curriculum, the system includes in-depth and continuous professional development that is designed to provide a deep understanding to strengthen knowledge of best practices revealed through needs assessments and data analysis. The St. Clair County School System believes embedded professional development is the most effective form of professional development as long as it involves follow up which is supportive and encourages long term growth for teachers. Further assessments of personnel preparation needs are made through administrative professional learning communities, grade level meetings, and Continuous Improvement Plan walkthroughs. Ongoing professional development is provided through coaching, mentoring, and leadership support. The St. Clair County School System funds professional development primarily through federal funds, state allotted professional development funds, local in-service center opportunities, special education, and local funds. Teachers attend workshops, participate in professional literature studies, and complete higher education course work. In addition, teachers attend local school professional development which is distinctly aligned with needs assessments and data findings. The St. Clair County School System website, and specifically the SharePoint site for employees, offers a rich variety of resources for employees to collaboratively research and share information that support instruction and best practices. Professional development planning is a systematic and comprehensive process. A professional learning plan is written for each certified teacher based on the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards. This is done collaboratively between administrators and teachers and is benchmarked periodically during the year. It is the belief of St. Clair County School System that teachers must plan and collaborate with one another. Teachers are provided time during the day for individual and collaborative planning in order for student achievement to be raised.

Policies and procedures are reviewed during in-service training sessions for school office personnel. Software instruction is given and small group sessions are held for specific office functions: STI student enrollment and attendance as well as payroll and bookkeeping procedures. According to the job assignment, specific program training is provided to instructional aides such as: computer lab operations, assisting students with physical needs, and implementation of selected programs. Policies and procedures are reviewed with instructional aides at the beginning of each new school year. Annual in-service training is held for child nutrition employees in safety, menu planning, and state and local requirements. Training sessions are held for maintenance staff to cover program requirements. Bus drivers meet to discuss local policies and procedures and attend training to maintain current Commercial Driver's License required by governmental regulations. Administrators develop and maintain a master schedule that meets state requirements as well as the instructional needs of the students. Uninterrupted reading and mathematics instruction is provided by elementary, intermediate, and middle schools. High school counselors help students plan for post secondary education and career/work opportunities.

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

Technology services are delivered through the Technology Department at the central office. The central office contracts with one employee at each school to serve as the school's technology contact. These employees serve as the initial points of contact through the district Help-Desk for technology questions or requests for help. System technicians' support of these schools, both hardware and software, provides advanced assistance as needed. District and school-based technology plans provide employees and students with a roadmap for technological advancement and implementation. The system has a technology integration specialist housed at

the central office.

The technology integration specialist is responsible for working with teachers in order to integrate 21st Century technology skills into daily lessons. Along with the continuous improvement coordinator and the coordinator of instruction, the technology integration specialist aligns all professional development and ensures technology is embedded in all facets of instruction. The St. Clair County School System envisions every child to be globally competitive and successful in the 21st century. Professional development opportunities have been provided to train teachers in the use of available 21st century equipment and programs. STI Professional Development allows administrators to track the professional development opportunities that teachers are engaged in. Federal, state, and local funds have been used to increase the inventory of technological opportunities for instruction. Technology is used within the classrooms in all schools to enhance student engagement. Many of the school's classrooms are equipped with the following:

- Data projectors
- Document cameras
- Classroom response system
- Digital cameras
- Interactive white boards

Students have daily access to computers. Most schools have at least one computer lab and student workstations in the classrooms. Internet research, classroom presentations, and access to software from the district, and each school's network ensure equity of access for all students. Students work on various educational programs and participate in computer diagnostic assessments. Programs such as Discovery Education offer teachers a formative view of student progress. The Accelerated Reader Program builds a culture for reading throughout our elementary schools. Online dual enrollment courses are offered to high school students so that high school and college credit may be obtained simultaneously. These courses offer students rigorous work which will propel them into college life. These courses are made available by a state of the art fiber optic network that allows students, teachers, and administrators to connect instantly to the many valuable resources available through the internet. Links on the school's and district's websites provide students with the ability to access online textbooks outside of the classroom.

District and school websites offer current information to employees, students, and community members. Individual teacher websites offer rich content in order to expand the learning beyond classroom hours. This resource also helps students who are absent from school or homebound because of extraordinary illness. The Software Technology, Inc. program, STI Home, offers parents access to student grades and attendance. The district email and SharePoint site allows communication between employees without interrupting instruction. Board policies, calendars of events, instructional websites, and current news announcements are posted. It is the expectation of the St. Clair County School System that teachers begin publishing during the 2010-2011 school year podcasts, blogs, and wikis so that daily instruction is enhanced. Through open access, media centers at local schools provide access to information, a variety of learning experiences, and a wide selection of literature to individuals, small groups, and classes. Atrium, a system wide library automation management program, is used to check out books. Audio and visual materials are available as well as use computers to search instructional websites. The St. Clair School's Career and Technical Education offers students instruction, skills, and leadership training to help prepare them for careers or post secondary training in career and technical

fields.

Overall Assessment: Operational

The school system implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The system demonstrates evidence of alignment between the curriculum and instructional practices with systematic implementation across the system. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students regular feedback to improve their performance.

Standard 4

Documenting & Using Results

STANDARD:

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

IMPACT STATEMENT:

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

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
4.1	Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and bias free			X	
4.2	Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning			X	
4.3	Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance			X	
4.4	Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders			X	
4.5	Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness			X	
4.6	Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence			X	
4.7	Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations			X	

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- All stakeholders are knowledgeable about behavioral standards
- All stakeholders are knowledgeable about grading and appeals
- All stakeholders are knowledgeable about learning expectations and targets for student performance
- Assessment system that records multiple assessments
- Assessment system that safeguards validity, confidentiality, identification
- Calendar of assessment activities
- Database that records graduation, completion, GPA, placement, retention rates
- Dedicated unit/staff for assessment and data reporting
- District staff use data to inform policies and practice
- Online assessment system
- Policies outline administration of multiple assessments and their purpose
- Policies that outline targets for behavioral standards: attendance, discipline
- Policies that outline targets for student performance and are aligned to state/national standards
- Record of multiple assessments administered, including program-specific required assessments
- Special database for career preparation, special education, bilingual education programs
- Staff affirm the use of multiple measures for student performance
- Stakeholders are familiar with the administration and purpose of multiple assessments
- Stakeholders are knowledgeable about the assessment schedule
- Stakeholders implement multiple assessment system
- Student/Staff Handbook that outlines grading scales, syllabus criteria, and appeal process
- The development and administration of multiple assessments consider limited-language learners, students with disabilities, and multiple learning styles

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Agendas, minutes from staff meetings indicate use of data to drive instructional planning discussions
- Agendas, minutes from staff meetings indicate utilization of data systems
- Criteria for evaluation of staff performance include the use of data for instructional planning
- District staff affirm their understanding of how data are used to evaluate their effectiveness
- District staff are knowledgeable about how to use student performance data for the purpose of instructional planning
- District staff meet regularly to discuss student work
- District staff utilize assessment data for the purpose of instructional and program planning

- Examples of student work are prominently displayed
- Student performance data reports, charts, graphs indicate system-wide use of data for instructional planning
- Students affirm knowledge about their learning expectations

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Data from community/business
- Data from multiple surveys indicate wide scale use of data to analyze instructional and organizational effectiveness
- Database that records graduation, post-graduate engagement
- District staff utilize business and community data to guide program planning
- District staff utilize perception data from surveys to guide program planning
- Stakeholders affirm their familiarity with student performance and organizational effectiveness
- Stakeholders affirm their involvement in meetings in which the topic of student performance and organizational effectiveness were highlighted

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Agendas, minutes from meetings where student performance and school effectiveness were highlighted
- District staff affirm the use of various communication methods to report student performance
- Newsletters demonstrate communication of student performance and school effectiveness
- Stakeholders affirm the use of various communication methods to report student performance

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Agenda, minutes of meetings in which comparative data were highlighted
- District staff affirm their involvement in meetings in which comparative data were highlighted
- Reports that outline comparable data analysis - across programs
- Reports that outline comparable data analysis - across schools, districts, states, nationally

4.6 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by

multiple sources of evidence:**Operational**

Evidence Provided:

- Data reports disaggregate student performance growth
- Data reports include behavioral and environmental data
- Data reports verify growth in student performance
- District staff can identify reasons why student performance has increased/decreased
- District staff can identify strategies for increasing student performance
- Stakeholders can speak to and support the growth data

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

Evidence Provided:

- District staff affirm their comfort with the level of data accuracy and security
- Policies that outline the conditions for safeguarding and transferring transcripts
- Policies that safeguard accuracy and security of all data
- Reports that satisfy local, state, and national requirements
- Stakeholders are knowledgeable about the conditions under which transcripts are safeguarded and transferred
- Stakeholders indicate that they have seen reports that satisfy local, state, and national requirements

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

The St. Clair County School System complies with the state assessment and accountability program to measure student progress. State mandated assessments, such as the Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA), Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS) for English Learners (EL), Stanford 10 (SAT 10), Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT), and the Alabama High School Graduation Examination (AHSGE) are used in the various grade levels as a part of the state accountability plan.

Although instruction is based on the Alabama Course of Study in the various subject areas, it is guided by the analysis of individual and group assessment results, both formal and informal. Additional assessments that are not included in the accountability plan for the state but are still required include Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Alabama Science Assessment (ASA), Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT), NAPE and EXPLORE for 8th graders. With the exception of DIBELS, these assessments are given once a year. In order to provide teachers and parents with more timely assessments, the county has also made use of other assessments such as the Accelerated Reader Program, Accelerated Math, Discovery Assessment (Think-Link), USA TestPrep assessments, APEX program, progress monitoring, grade level assessments, teacher-made tests, nine-week and semester exams.

The school district as well as each individual school are required to develop and submit a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) based on analysis of assessment results. District and school administrators utilize the system-wide and individual school report cards prepared by the Alabama Department of Education Accountability Reporting System to determine trends across multiple years, using multiple data sources. Longitudinal data guides system/school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders in understanding the impact of current practices on student performance and system/school effectiveness.

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

The Superintendent and other central office personnel disseminate results of assessments accountability results to schools as soon as the information is made available from the state. These assessment results are analyzed by central office and school administrators before being made available to school faculty and other stakeholders.

After the results have been analyzed and disaggregated, they are communicated through the district's institute day at the beginning of the school year, principal's meetings, faculty meetings, parent-teacher meetings, on the St. Clair County School System website, the state Accountability website, newsletters, newspapers and report cards. Assessment results are given to parents in a timely manner (i.e. Open House, parent conferences). Central office personnel, school administrators and school CIP teams make periodic presentations to the school board to review progress and/or areas of concern.

Furthermore, each school has a leadership team that works with the administration and the district School Improvement Coordinator. This team reviews and revises assessment data, finds areas of strength and weakness, and develops a plan to address weaknesses. All CIP's are submitted to the school improvement coordinator for approval. Following approval, the CIP plan becomes the action plan for the school.

Ongoing assessment information is also provided to students and parents in a timely manner. Each student receives a progress report in the middle of each nine weeks and a report card at the end of the nine weeks. These reports are to be signed by the parent or guardian and returned, so that parents can better monitor their child's progress.

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

Assessment data analysis helps the district and the individual schools better understand student achievement, faculty effectiveness and curriculum implementation. Each year, school administration looks at school data to make scheduling decisions to improve student learning. Teachers look at student data to facilitate student progress, both as a class or individually.

In order for a school district to make AYP under NCLB, the district must look at the disaggregated data from three grade spans: Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12. System AYP is determined by goals set in the areas of reading, math and an academic indicator. The St. Clair County School System did not make AYP for 2010-2011. This is the first time the district has not made AYP. The system did not meet the goal in the area of reading in the sub-category of special education.

The St. Clair County School System recognizes the importance of meeting the accountability requirements and considers that the first level of effectiveness. Going beyond accountability requires that the school system drill down to the school level, the school level drills down to the grade level, the grade level drills down to the classroom level and the classroom level drills down to the individual student level. Currently school administrators and faculty are collaborating to implement a plan to address the system-wide deficit.

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

The St. Clair County School System employs a system-wide School Improvement (SI) Coordinator who serves as a liaison between the schools, the district and the state department. The SI Coordinator facilitates compliance with state requirements while working within the school system to provide opportunities to improve and grow. The primary focus is on schools that do not make AYP or are in school improvement. This school year, the focus is on system-wide special education services. Working with the SI coordinator in this endeavor is the Special Education Coordinator, the Instruction Coordinator and the Testing Coordinator.

Central office personnel conduct data meetings with principals and principals conduct data meetings with faculty. The district Test Coordinator conducts training sessions for each assessment with the building test coordinators, which are usually the counselors. The building test coordinator attends the system-level trainings and goes back to individual schools to conduct school-level trainings for the faculty for each assessment.

Administrators and counselors work with faculty to disseminate test results to faculty and help to interpret data for strengths and weaknesses in achievement. Data is used to drive instruction and construct plans for school improvement and intervention. Teachers submit weekly lesson plans which must be in accordance with the Alabama Course of Study, as well as objectives and item specifications for each test that is administered in the teacher's subject area and grade level.

Overall Assessment: Operational

The school system uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results. The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to system/school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school and system effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

Standard 5

Resource & Support Systems

STANDARD:

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

IMPACT STATEMENT:

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

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
Human Resources. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
5.1	Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities			X	
5.2	Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)				X
5.3	Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff			X	
5.4	Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable			X	
Financial Resources. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
5.5	Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement				X
5.6	Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures				X
Physical Resources. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					

5.7	Maintains sites, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment			X	
5.8	Establishes and implements written security and crisis management plans with appropriate training for stakeholders			X	
5.9	Implements processes and plans for maintaining and improving sites, facilities, and equipment			X	
5.10	Provides technology infrastructure and equipment that is up-to-date and sufficient to accomplish the system's goals			X	
Support Systems. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
5.11	Provides and coordinates support services that meet the health, counseling, nutrition, safety, co-curricular, transportation, and special learning needs of all students			X	
5.12	Provides student support services coordinated with the school, home, and community			X	

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

Evidence Provided:

- Agendas, minutes, decisions for district and school level IEP meetings
- Appropriate space is provided for special need support programs
- District staff can affirm that special needs students receive needed support
- IEP: Individualized Education Plans
- Personnel policies ensuring appropriate hiring practices
- Personnel policies ensuring certification, licensure, evaluation, training
- Professional learning opportunities
- Program descriptions: Special Needs Populations
- Schedules: District, School, Extra-Curricular; Transportation
- Staff Handbooks
- Staff schedules and assignments
- Student Handbook

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

Evidence Provided:

- Labor agreement
- Personnel policies ensuring appropriate placement

- Personnel policies ensuring certification, licensure, evaluation, training
- Policies regarding NCLB highly qualified teachers
- Professional learning opportunities
- Staff can affirm that they are teaching in their major area of study
- Staff Handbook
- Staff schedules and assignments
- Staffing of both administrative and teaching positions is appropriate and adequate

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Budget demonstrates appropriate allocation for PD
- Calendar, agenda, summaries of PD opportunities
- District monitoring of professional development implementation
- District staff are actively engaged in discussions that have resulted from their professional development experience
- District staff can affirm their involvement in professional learning opportunities
- Evaluation of PD data
- Personnel policies that stipulate PD requirements
- Professional development plan
- Staff are aware of the requirements for continuous learning
- Staff implement effective strategies based on their professional development experience

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Budget demonstrates appropriate allocation for staffing
- Class size indicates appropriate and effective support of student learning
- Master schedule
- Personnel policies and practices
- Policies regarding NCLB highly qualified teachers

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- Annual budget - current, forecasted, fund-equity
- Consolidated Application (federal)
- Facilities plan - current, future
- Facilities protection documentation: insurance, amortization
- Fiscal policies: use of all funding, including donations, reserves, discretionary
- Infrastructure plans: short and long range
- Practices that support appropriate use of allocated funds
- Purchasing/replacement policies: adherence to EEO
- School-level budgets
- Space is adequate and appropriate to support student learning

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

- Audit reports
- Fiscal protection plans: insurance
- Organizational oversight of fiscal authority
- Payroll and purchasing policies and processes
- Practices that support appropriate use of fiscal resources
- Refund policies
- Secure management of all fiscal processes

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- All district-wide facilities are properly maintained
- Calendar of safety drills: fire, tornado, emergency crisis
- Curriculum includes attention to cleanliness and safety
- District staff are involved in developing and implementing safety policies
- District support staff are knowledgeable about safety policies
- District-wide environment is clean and safe
- Facilities maintenance reports and plans
- HAZMAT (hazardous materials): policies and training

- Policies and processes regarding safety
- Policies and processes related to student/staff injury
- Policies regarding dispensing prescription medications
- Stakeholder survey data supporting safety
- State and Federal regulations regarding special program safety requirements

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Crisis intervention committee
- Crisis intervention plan
- District staff and students are knowledgeable about emergency procedures
- District staff are involved in the crisis intervention team
- Emergency procedures
- Health support staff are available
- Secure record system
- Staff Handbook
- Student Handbook
- Wellness policy

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Appropriate district staff affirm their knowledge of the plan for physical asset maintenance and replacement
- Physical assets plan: short-term and long-range
- Policies and procedures for maintaining and improving physical assets: site facilities, infrastructure, equipment, etc.

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- District staff are knowledgeable about the short and long range plans for maintenance and replacement of technology infrastructure
- Policies and procedures for maintaining and improving technology infrastructure: hardware and software
- Policies and procedures regarding appropriate internet access
- Policies and procedures regarding the purchase of technology tools
- Stakeholders are knowledgeable about policies regarding appropriate internet access

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Advisory plan and program
- Alternative Education Program
- District monitors instruction for special needs inclusion
- District provides guidelines for classroom instruction that demonstrates variety of instructional methodologies to support all students
- District provides guidelines for Response To Intervention program and is demonstrated at classroom level
- IEP: committee, minutes, calendar, agenda, sign-in sheets
- Labor agreements demonstrating appropriate special needs staffing
- Master schedules demonstrating support for special needs
- Policies and procedures that are ADA and IDEA compliant
- Professional development calendar and topics
- Special Needs Department/Committee
- Staff affirm their use of instructional strategies that support special needs inclusion
- Staffing of Counseling and Guidance programs
- Stakeholders affirm their support for the district's special needs programs
- Student referral policies and practices
- Student referral process and procedures
- Students and staff affirm their understanding of special needs populations
- Teacher certification, licensure, etc. supporting special needs
- Translated materials demonstrate communication to special needs population

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Career Preparation Department/Committee
- Community based programs
- Curriculum for Career Preparation
- District staff affirm that they receive regular training opportunities to support student behavior
- District staff are knowledgeable in all aspects of appropriate social/emotional support for student learning behavior
- Enrollment data - current status, trends
- Guidance and Counseling Department/Committee
- Job Placement program
- Master schedule indicates availability of career preparation

- Orientation to Career Preparation programs
- Professional development: calendar, topics
- Staff assigned to career preparation programs
- Students are enrolled in career preparation
- Students are knowledgeable about career planning programs

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

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

It is the goal of the St. Clair County School System to recruit, employ, retain and mentor a highly qualified professional and support staff. The school district recruits certified employees by using the TEACH in Alabama application service provided by the Alabama State Department of Education. St. Clair County Schools (SCCS) is able to contact highly qualified candidates from around the world. The Human Resources staff attend college and university recruitment fairs across Alabama searching for highly qualified employees. SCCS also works with area colleges to provide internship opportunities for students completing their student teaching requirements. This gives our local school administrators an opportunity to see the new recruits first hand. The district also posts all job vacancies both certified and support on the system website.

The employment process includes obtaining letters of interest, resumes, applications and references from interested applicants. Administrators review documents and set interviews. Interviews are held with team members participating in the process. Applicants are asked questions related to the qualifications and the essential functions of the jobs. Team members discuss the candidate's qualifications, experience, talents, professional attitude and aptitudes with the administrator. The administrator makes contact with the applicant's references and then makes a recommendation to the Personnel Director. The Personnel Director reviews the employment file for the required documents. Certified employees must hold or be eligible for an Alabama teaching certificate endorsed in the subject area and grade level needed for hire. Highly qualified letters are reviewed for proper documentation. Non-teaching professional staff such as nurses, physical therapist, occupational therapist, must meet the certification/licensure requirements established by the state and/or their relevant professional association. The paraprofessional staff meets the requirements of the state and has appropriate training to complete their assignment and serve under the direct supervision of professional personnel. All hires are made with the best interest of students in mind.

The retention efforts begin when the district welcomes a new employee. This process begins with a new employee orientation. New employees are welcomed by the Superintendent and introduced to other district administrators. Time is devoted to completing paperwork required for payroll, benefits and taxes. District policies and procedures are reviewed and discussed. Training and guidance is provided in the areas of classroom management, student information software, best practices and school system initiatives.

The retention efforts include assigning all new teachers to a highly qualified mentor in their home school. Regularly scheduled meetings are set and impromptu meetings are encouraged. Opportunities for new teachers to meet with other new teachers are planned throughout the school year. Reading coaches are available to model best practices in the elementary schools. New employees are evaluated regularly throughout the school

year in accordance with Educate Alabama and PEPE guidelines. The evaluation process is meant to improve performance. This process is used to encourage, improve and retain employees. Professional development is key to improving and retaining highly qualified staff members. Staff are provided opportunities for professional growth in their local schools, during hours of employment and embedded in the curriculum. Professional development opportunities are closely aligned with their own professional development plan and the school's improvement plan. The district is committed to attracting, employing, retaining and mentoring highly qualified employees to improve positive student outcomes for all children.

Certified and support staff are assigned to schools based on enrollment and needs. Earned units for administrators, counselors, library media specialist and teachers are placed where they are earned. Locally funded units are placed where they are most needed.

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

The St. Clair County School System prides itself on its sound financial management practices. All the resource allocations are based on the district vision, mission and belief statements and are implemented by the district budgets. The budgets are developed in accordance with local and state guidelines. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) meets with the Superintendent and Human Resource Director, department heads, local school administrators and other management personnel to develop an annual system wide budget and meets quarterly with department heads to monitor the budget and submit budget amendments to the Board for approval as needed. The Child Nutrition budget is developed by the Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Director based upon needs communicated at CNP manager meetings through-out the year, and upon meals served at each school. This budget is submitted with the system-wide budget for Board approval. Details of the annual budget are shared with the public at two Board meetings held prior to budget approval, at which time the public is invited to submit their written or verbal comments or questions.

The district follows state and federal guidelines for determining allocations to the various cost centers. State funds are normally allocated as they are earned by Average Daily Membership (ADM) reported on the 20th day after Labor Day, and federal funds are allocated in accordance with grantor-approved budgets. State Classroom Instructional Support (CIS) fund budgets are developed by a budget committee at each local school and voted on by secret ballots of certified units. Approved CIS budgets are reviewed for compliance with technology plans, professional development plans, etc., and with applicable legal guidelines before being added to the district budget. Local funds are allocated first to critical areas under-funded by state OCE funds, such as maintenance and utilities, and remaining funds, if any, are allocated to funding high priority items on the 5-year capital plan, and to schools for various purposes. Janitorial allocations are based upon combination of square footage and ADM at each location. Certain supplements are provided by the Board of Education for athletics and band, and each principal submits recommendations for these payments. CNP allocations are based upon meals served.

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

The St. Clair County School System follows all federal, state and local guidelines applicable to support services for students and actively recruits and employs central office and individual school staff to provide support services to students. Services are coordinated in conjunction with the student's academic program to capitalize

on student potential. St. Clair County Schools provide a vast array of services for students to address the child as a whole.

Services available include, but are not limited to special education services, health and safety, nutrition, students at-risk for failure, English Learners, transportation, counseling, tutorial assistance, problem solving teams, gifted, character education and extra-curricular activities.

The Special Education Director ensures that complete and appropriate education services are provided for benefited students in all schools. The Special Education Director also supervises and coordinates Individual Education Plans (IEP's) in the schools. Special education teachers ensure that regular education teachers have read student IEP's and are implementing accommodations/modifications needed for these students.

Gifted students receive services through a variety of service delivery options depending on the age of the student and the resources available to the LEA. Examples of service delivery options include: consultative services from the gifted specialist provided in the regular classroom setting (e.g., extra materials, learning centers); curriculum compacting; cluster grouping with differentiated curriculum in the regular classroom; cross-age grouping in areas of strength; traditional pullout services for 3-5 hours a week; advanced curriculum provided by qualified regular education teachers through differentiated curriculum; electives in a variety of talent areas (art, music choral and instrumental, technology taught by qualified instructors; advanced core curriculum classes provided by qualified regular or distance learning instructor; electives in a variety of talent areas (art, music choral and instrumental, technology, foreign languages) taught by qualified instructors; and counseling services for college and career preparation.

The school district employs twenty-one counselors. They provide individual and group counseling opportunities for all students. Some of the offerings include: anger management, conflict resolution, peer relationships, divorce, crisis counseling, study skills and college and career development. Guidance counselors may also assist students and families with issues that may limit or interfere with learning as well as with post-secondary opportunities and educational enrichment activities. Parent education materials, referral information for social service agencies, scholarship applications and many other valuable resources are available from school guidance counselors. School counselors also head up the character education programs at each school. Problem Solving Teams (PST) can be found in each school. These teams provide the first step in identifying struggling students and work to develop different strategies to help the student succeed.

Tutorial programs are provided through Title funds, community education funds, grants and faculty members who donate their time to help struggling students.

Students may be assigned to attend the Ruben Yancy Alternative School. The program is designed to decrease the number of students suspended for violating the Code of Student Conduct. Students must be referred by local school administrators with admission coordinated with the Alternative School staff. The program serves students in grades k-12.

A Wellness Plan is developed each year. It incorporates the Child Nutrition Program and School Nurses. Under the supervision of the Director of Child Nutrition each individual school provides nutritious breakfast and lunch programs, including free/reduced lunch benefits to eligible students. The Wellness Plan focuses on the dietary and lifestyle choices made in the home and at school. The Wellness Plan is in compliance with state and federal

guidelines for child nutrition. Students receive physical education classes in both elementary and secondary grades. The system has recently been awarded the Safe Schools Healthy Students (SS/HS) federal initiative as well as a Drug Testing grant. The SS/HS initiative has enabled one community in our school system to receive two certified school resource officers (SRO), three mental health workers, and access to a psychiatrist monthly. In addition, the SS/HS initiative provides drug prevention, violence prevention, family group, and school climate curricula and programs. An additional SRO in one other high school is funded through local funds. Nine school nurses administer medications for students, provide general medical services to students and evaluate students for more severe medical emergencies. The nurse coordinator provides training for employees to help in emergency situations and the training of certified employees in administering medication when a nurse is not available. School nurses try to help children stay in school so they can learn. We do, however, follow Public Health Department guidelines to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases and conditions.

The St. Clair County School System was awarded the Carol M. White PEP Grant beginning with the 2008-2009 school year and ending with the 2010-2011 school year. The specific project is titled Promoting a Lifetime of Activity for Youth (PLAY). The goal is to expand and improve the physical education program in all district schools in order to make progress toward the Alabama State Standards for physical education and improve the general fitness of St. Clair County students. The FitnessGram (a software program that measures and monitors the fitness level and body composition of each student) program has been implemented as a testing and accountability method for teachers and students. Professional development has been provided by NASPE, to train teachers to utilize FitnessGram software. New curriculum (Focused Fitness) has been purchased for all schools and after school care programs. Professional development has been provided for all teachers and after school staff, by Focused Fitness. All secondary schools have been provided large fitness equipment (Treadmills, Elliptical, Spin Bikes) to create a Fitness Area for student use. All schools have received pedometers and pedometer curriculum and participate in a pedometer program for the PLAY Grant. The district also monitors, four weeks out of the year, the amount of time students spend doing physical activity. The PLAY program has improved the district's ability to help students meet State standards for physical education, meet Federal GPRA benchmarks for weekly activity, and acquire life-long habits that will improve their chances for becoming healthy, productive adults.

Extra-Curricular activities are an intrinsic part of child development. The well rounded student should be able to choose from a wide variety of offerings. St. Clair County Schools offer a variety of extra-curricular activities: sports, music, art, clubs, organizations, and academic teams. Individual schools differ somewhat in the offerings that they are able to provide. Athletic opportunities could include archery, track, golf, tennis, soccer, wrestling, volleyball, softball, baseball, basketball, football and cheerleading. Opportunities in the arts could include marching and concert band, chorus, dramatic arts, and fine arts. Clubs such as 4-H, Jr. Beta, Sr. Beta, FTA, FFA, FHA, and career technical clubs are offered at schools within our district. Students have the opportunity to participate in organizations such as SGA, yearbook and newspaper. Academic teams, such as debate team, scholars bowl team and math team provide reinforcement of educational concepts learned in the classroom. Guidelines for these activities are addressed in the student handbook and Code Of Conduct and individual activity by-laws/constitutions.

It is the objective of the St. Clair County Board of Education to assure that all students who wish to participate in competitive extracurricular student activities be given the opportunity to do so in a safe, drug-free environment and that all students, while under the supervision of the school system be completely free from the effects of

alcohol and or the presence of illegal or controlled substances. In an effort to meet this objective, the Board of Education reserves the right to require any student desiring to participate in competitive extracurricular programs to submit to drug/alcohol tests at any time prior to, during, or following an athletic event, practice, competition, or at any other time while under the supervision of the school system.

The Transportation Department provides transportation for all students who meet the requirements to ride school buses. This department also trains and supervises bus drives, coordinates daily routes and field trip transportation and provides maintenance to ensure bus travel. All bus drivers have the proper credentials needed to drive a bus. The Transportation Department provides transportation to over 4,718 students. There are 89 bus routes that cover 2,141 miles per day for round trips.

Student demographics are accessed and monitored through the use of Software Technology Inc. (STI). All student demographic data including grades and discipline is tracked using this program. Special education records are maintained electronically through SETSWeb. All information contained within the database is secured by user passwords.

Overall Assessment: Operational

The school system has 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 system employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The system provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. The system ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Standard 6

Stakeholder Communications & Relationships

STANDARD:

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

IMPACT STATEMENT:

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

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
6.1	Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning			X	
6.2	Uses system-wide strategies to listen to and communicate with stakeholders			X	
6.3	Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system			X	
6.4	Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders			X	
6.5	Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders			X	

6.1	Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning:		Operational
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Evidence Provided:

- Agendas, minutes, calendar of parent meetings
- Calendar of events that promote stakeholder involvement
- District staff affirm that stakeholders are involved in many aspects of district events, activities, decisions
- Internship/partnership agreements with community-based business and agencies
- Parents and community members regularly volunteer time in district
- Policies regarding suggestions, grievances

- Stakeholder survey data
- Stakeholders affirm that they are involved in many aspects of district events, activities, decisions

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

Evidence Provided:

- Calendars, agendas, minutes of parent meetings
- District Improvement Committee: agendas, minutes, membership
- Emails, phone answering system
- Newsletters, brochures, letters, memos
- Parent - Teacher conferences schedule
- Policies regarding formal inclusion of stakeholder involvement
- Stakeholders affirm they have variety of opportunities to be formally involved in life of district
- Steering Committee meetings: agendas, minutes, membership
- Web page dedicated to parents/community members
- Wide variety of stakeholder communication documents/avenues

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

Evidence Provided:

- Advisory Committees
- Calendar, agendas, minutes, committee membership
- Schedule of volunteer activities
- Stakeholder survey data
- Stakeholders affirm that they are actively involved in providing expertise

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

Evidence Provided:

- Brochures, pamphlets
- Newsletters about student performance
- Online calendar, schedule, and news/updates
- Parent -teacher conferences: calendar, procedures, participation data
- Parents and students are informed and involved in making course selections
- Regularly published newsletters to community
- Stakeholders affirm that they are knowledgeable about student learning
- Student Handbook

6.5 Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders:**Operational**

Evidence Provided:

- Parent -teacher conferences: calendar, procedures, participation data
- Policies regarding reporting schedule
- Report cards

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

St. Clair County Schools continuously work toward building, enhancing and sustaining effective communication with its stakeholders. The St. Clair County School System Superintendent employs the leadership from its Parental Involvement Coordinator and school leaders in the pursuit of collecting data on stakeholder expectations and satisfaction. One of the many strengths of the system is the active role of the Parental Involvement Coordinator and schools leaders in providing information to the county stakeholders and soliciting feedback from parents and community leaders. Parents, community leaders, teachers, and students are encouraged to respond to self-study questionnaires and surveys, which reflect a favorable rating of satisfaction for the school system's efforts.

At the district level, the Parental Involvement Coordinator whose responsibilities includes maintaining the Parent Resource Center (PRC), disseminating information to stakeholders by way of presentations at nightly school events, providing academic resources to families, and producing a quarterly newsletter. Each school leader conducts activities at appropriate times for parents and community leaders to attend such as academic honors ceremonies, campus open houses, school orientations, family reading and math nights, school liberal arts performances, scholastic and athletic competitions, parent workshops on accountability results and student achievement, and mandated parent conferences, initiatives conducted throughout the school year. School leaders take advantage of these venues to distribute surveys and solicit information from stakeholders to improve their campus and overall satisfaction of the school district. Most system schools provide suggestion boxes at their campus to provide stakeholders opportunities to provide feedback and voice concerns throughout the school year.

All forms of parent-school interactions are considered to be the districts greatest resource to understanding and reflecting on stakeholder expectations and satisfaction. Another way that school leaders are responsive to stakeholder expectations is using the site-based decision making approach to ensure their suggestions and recommendations are known on both school and system committees such as the Advisory Council Team (ACT), Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO), textbook and curriculum committees, school hiring committees, state compliance teams, school and library budget committees, and school improvement teams.

The district provides stakeholders an opportunity to address concerns and provide suggestions through monthly Board of Education work sessions and meetings. The meeting agendas are available to the public and are posted on the SCCS website. During each meeting, citizens are encouraged and invited to participate by bringing concerns or recommendations before the School Board. The district collaborates with local, state, and federal

governments, as well as, community based organizations (i.e. Sheriff's Department, Shriners, Kiwanis, Jefferson State Community College) to merge and promote services, which simplifies implementation of common goals. The St. Clair County School System utilizes additional support to its local schools by providing youth resource officers, social workers, school psychologist, and school nurses to assure that schools are responsive to the needs of its stakeholders. The district also provides an avenue for all students to engage in a formal education and afterschool instruction through its alternative school program, "Day Program," Eden Career and Technical Center, "ACCESS" (distance learning) labs, dual enrollment (University of Alabama, Jefferson State Community College), afterschool care, and community education programs.

The district has active business partners that work with every school to promote student achievement. Numerous local businesses and agencies such as Alabama Cooperative Extension, Boys and Girls Clubs, City Councils, Emergency Management Agency, Community Fire Departments, Community Libraries, Community Chamber of Commerce, County Commission, Juvenile Probation Office, Public Health Department, Relay for Life, and Sheriff's Department provide essential support to local schools, St. Clair County Education Foundation, and District Community Education Programs. The Eden Career and Technical Center has developed and fostered business relationships to better serve students in our district with industry certifications. Students are mentored, given shadowing opportunities, work studies, internships, and scholarships. The relationships that have been developed and nurtured across the eighteen county schools with stakeholders ensure that community expectations are met and stakeholders are given continued possibility to participate in carrying out district goals.

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

As one of the fastest growing counties in rural Alabama, the St. Clair County School System places a high standard on building relationships with its stakeholders. The district mission in building and fostering a supportive learning community is most evident through its dedication to provide a safe and collaborative environment conducive to academic excellence; "Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders Today." This commitment starts with the open communication and collaboration with all its stakeholders. A variety of communication measures are used to promote the school-to-home partnership: Advisory Council Team (ACT), Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)), parent surveys, system and school websites, parent resource center, School Messenger Communication System, superintendent newsletters, monthly Board of Education meetings, local newspaper and media outlets (St. Clair Times, & The St. Clair News Aegis), and major civic organizations. At the school level, several types of meetings and workshops are held on a regular basis. Response To Intervention Teams (RTI), PTO, ACT, student government, School Improvement Leadership Team, grade-level honors assemblies, National Elementary Honor Society, Jr. BETA Club and Sr. BETA Club inductions, parent workshops, and family reading and math nights all serve as settings for stakeholder collaboration and building reciprocal relationships.

Each school within the county maintains their individual school website giving access to classroom information and teachers. Each school leader will update and provide local school announcements regarding weekly and monthly activities through websites and newsletters. Teachers provide important curriculum information by way of lesson plans and grading through STI Home, teacher web pages, conduct sheets, progress reports, and report cards are examples of school-to-home communication used to report pertinent student information and to help keep parents current with academic progress. SCCS rely heavily on electronic communication and fosters the use

of this collaborative resource with its stakeholders. The survey of our parents reveals electronic communication is the best method for disseminating information from school-to-home; however SCCS continues to distribute all district communication in printed form. It is common practice for district schools to maintain parent e-mail distribution systems to better notify stakeholders of upcoming event and system information.

Essential to the counties collaborative effort, the district solicits its stakeholders for feedback and provides opportunities for stakeholders to participate in site-based decision making. System and School Improvement Teams give parent representatives input related to curriculum, budget and finance, campus personnel, and the overall direction of the school system. This involvement is crucial for parents to feel as a partner to making important decisions regarding their child's education. Individual school and student assessment data are presented by school leaders to stakeholders in many formal and informal workshops and meetings. Parent conferences are embedded within the school calendar and mandated during the first semester of the school year. However, administrators and teachers are always available for parent conferences. Other informal contacts are used and taken advantage of at all levels during special events and extracurricular activities at each local school.

The St. Clair County School System is dedicated to meeting the needs of our families through any avenue possible to maintain a steady flow of information that assist families in staying knowledgeable of district initiatives and improvements. The district takes a small rural mentality of "knowing and taking care of our neighbors" and using "a tenacious work ethic" to make the lives of the students a priority.

Overall Assessment: Operational

The school system has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. System and school personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts and can demonstrate good participation by some stakeholder groups.

Standard 7

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

STANDARD:

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

IMPACT STATEMENT:

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

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system operates under the jurisdiction of a governing authority that:					
7.1					X
7.2	Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system				X
7.3	Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations				X
7.4	Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board				X
7.5	Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources				X
7.6	Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations				X
7.7	Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations				X
In fulfillment of this standard, the system has leadership that:					

7.8	Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness			X	
7.9	Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs			X	

Indicator	Evidence	Type	Selection
7.1	Continuous Improvement Plan - district and individual schools	Artifact	X
7.1	Specific program initiatives to support continuous improvement	Artifact	X
7.1	Information/Data system	Artifact	X
7.1	Record of student performance improvement efforts	Artifact	X
7.1	State/Federal Accountability Plan	Artifact	X
7.1	Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics	Artifact	X
7.1	Stakeholder survey (satisfaction) data	Artifact	X
7.1	Graduation and retention rates	Artifact	X
7.1	Postsecondary engagement: employment, college	Artifact	
7.1	Other:	Artifact	
7.1	District staff affirm their involvement in continuous improvement committees	Practice	X
7.1	District staff affirm their involvement in a specific program that supports continuous improvement	Practice	X
7.1	Other:	Practice	
7.2	Stakeholder survey data demonstrating stakeholder involvement in district and school improvement	Artifact	X
7.2	Calendar, agendas, minutes, sign-in sheets demonstrating stakeholder involvement in district and school improvement	Artifact	X
7.2	Policies, procedures for district and school improvement committee work	Artifact	X
7.2	District and School Improvement plan indicating membership of committees	Artifact	X
7.2	Parent compact	Artifact	X

7.2	Other:	Artifact	
7.2	Stakeholders affirm their involvement in continuous improvement process	Practice	X
7.2	Other:	Practice	
7.3	School improvement plans demonstrate alignment with district vision, purpose	Artifact	X
7.3	Vision, purpose posted in district-wide facilities	Artifact	X
7.3	Data: student performance, stakeholder opinion are used in development of school improvement plan	Artifact	X
7.3	Student performance targets are communicated to all stakeholders	Artifact	X
7.3	Evaluation data demonstrating impact of plan and actions taken to remediate	Artifact	X
7.3	Calendar, agendas, minutes of school improvement meetings	Artifact	X
7.3	Other:	Artifact	
7.3	Staff, students affirm their understanding of student performance targets	Practice	X
7.3	District staff affirm their understanding of the impact of programs that support student learning	Practice	X
7.3	District staff demonstrate capacity for providing methodologies to increase student performance	Practice	X
7.3	Other:	Practice	
7.4	School improvement plans demonstrate evaluation of goals, objectives, and strategies impact on student growth	Artifact	X
7.4	District guidelines and professional learning provide strategies for effective instruction for closing achievement gaps	Artifact	X
7.4	Other:	Artifact	
7.4	District staff affirm their involvement in evaluating the impact of instruction on student growth	Practice	X
7.4	District staff affirm that they regularly use data to inform their practices	Practice	X

7.4	District staff meetings regularly use data to inform their discussions and decisions	Practice	X
7.4	Other:	Practice	
7.5	Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics	Artifact	X
7.5	Personnel Policies that outline staff evaluation process	Artifact	X
7.5	Continuous Improvement Plan - district and individual schools	Artifact	X
7.5	Other:	Artifact	
7.5	District staff affirm their involvement in professional learning	Practice	X
7.5	Other:	Practice	
7.6	Annual Report	Artifact	X
7.6	Newsletters, brochures	Artifact	X
7.6	Parent-Teacher conferences	Artifact	X
7.6	Information/Data system	Artifact	X
7.6	Staffing assignments support monitoring and reporting of continuous improvement efforts	Artifact	X
7.6	Other:	Artifact	
7.6	Stakeholders affirm receipt of district communication regarding improvement efforts	Practice	
7.6	District staff and stakeholders affirm the use of performance data during Parent-Teacher conferences	Practice	X
7.6	Other:	Practice	
7.7	Evaluation of effectiveness of continuous improvement plan and process	Artifact	X
7.7	District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions	Artifact	X
7.7	District Labor Agreement includes language protecting school improvement planning time	Artifact	

7.7	Other:	Artifact	
7.7	Stakeholders affirm knowledge of an evaluation of the district's improvement efforts	Practice	X
7.7	Other:	Practice	
7.8	Policies and procedures for engaging in district-wide and individual school improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring	Artifact	X
7.8	District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions	Artifact	X
7.8	Other:	Artifact	
7.8	District staff affirm that time is allocated for improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring	Practice	X
7.8	Other:	Practice	
7.9	District expectations and guidelines for all schools and departments to engage in a continuous improvement process	Artifact	X
7.9	District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions	Artifact	X
7.9	Other:	Artifact	
7.9	District staff affirm their knowledge of the district's expectations and guidelines for supporting student performance	Practice	X
7.9	Other:	Practice	

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Continuous Improvement Plan - district and individual schools
- District staff affirm their involvement in a specific program that supports continuous improvement
- District staff affirm their involvement in continuous improvement committees
- Graduation and retention rates
- Information/Data system
- Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics
- Record of student performance improvement efforts
- Specific program initiatives to support continuous improvement
- Stakeholder survey (satisfaction) data
- State/Federal Accountability Plan

7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement: Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Calendar, agendas, minutes, sign-in sheets demonstrating stakeholder involvement in district and school improvement
- District and School Improvement plan indicating membership of committees
- Parent compact
- Policies, procedures for district and school improvement committee work
- Stakeholders affirm their involvement in continuous improvement process

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

Evidence Provided:

- Calendar, agendas, minutes of school improvement meetings
- Data: student performance, stakeholder opinion are used in development of school improvement plan
- District staff affirm their understanding of the impact of programs that support student learning
- District staff demonstrate capacity for providing methodologies to increase student performance
- Evaluation data demonstrating impact of plan and actions taken to remediate
- School improvement plans demonstrate alignment with district vision, purpose
- Staff, students affirm their understanding of student performance targets

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

Evidence Provided:

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

- District staff affirm that they regularly use data to inform their practices
- District staff affirm their involvement in evaluating the impact of instruction on student growth
- District staff meetings regularly use data to inform their discussions and decisions
- School improvement plans demonstrate evaluation of goals, objectives, and strategies impact on student growth

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Continuous Improvement Plan - district and individual schools
- District staff affirm their involvement in professional learning
- Personnel Policies that outline staff evaluation process
- Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- Annual Report
- District staff and stakeholders affirm the use of performance data during Parent-Teacher conferences
- Information/Data system
- Newsletters, brochures
- Parent-Teacher conferences
- Staffing assignments support monitoring and reporting of continuous improvement efforts

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions
- Evaluation of effectiveness of continuous improvement plan and process
- Stakeholders affirm knowledge of an evaluation of the district's improvement efforts

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions
- District staff affirm that time is allocated for improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring

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

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

Operational

Evidence Provided:

- District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions
- District expectations and guidelines for all schools and departments to engage in a continuous improvement process
- District staff affirm their knowledge of the district's expectations and guidelines for supporting student performance

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

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

The St. Clair County School System is committed to a comprehensive continuous school improvement process that serves as the foundation of student learning and achievement. The district and local school Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) share a common framework based upon the district's vision, mission, shared beliefs and goals and address the specific needs of the individual school. (Plan, Do, Check and Act) Internal and external stakeholders including administrators, teachers, parents, community members and business leaders are invited to participate in the planning process. As soon as data results are available from the state the district provides opportunities for the CIP team members to review and analyze longitudinal student performance, update demographics, student and teacher attendance, AYP, teacher evaluation, surveys, feeder school data, and discipline reports and analyze existing curricular. This information is strategically placed in the components of the CIP which include; goals to address academic needs, English proficiency needs, building supportive learning environments, federal requirements if applicable, professional learning needs and comprehensive budgeting. The district and school goals are aligned to reflect overall performance and to promote achievement for all students. After the goals are established, the CIP team identifies instructional decisions based on researched strategies and action steps, which is the how, what and when of the classroom instruction. The St. Clair County School System values teacher effectiveness and classroom instruction as the most important factor toward improving student achievement. The next step is to inspect what you expect. This happens when teachers use the accountability component which determines if intervention is necessary, monitoring student progress and the results of improvement efforts in the classroom. Based upon the results of this accountability the teachers are then expected to provide adjustments in lesson plans, relevant intervention or enrichment opportunities to all students.

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

The primary mission of the St. Clair County School System is to provide students with quality, engaging work that is rigorous, relevant and transcends beyond the boundaries of the schools walls. The ultimate purpose is to prepare students to be successful lifelong learners in a global competitive workplace and acquiring applicable life skills. With this purpose in mind the district developed a set of goals based on the vision and mission which allow all levels to fully understand their roles in creating a positive environment for students and staff. Professional learning opportunities are directly related to the needs of students throughout the district. Each school is challenged to incorporate the district's vision, mission and goals into their individual school plan. In 2007, the state identified two of our district high schools in most need of improvement in the area of graduation rate. The School Improvement Coordinator worked with the school's CIP Team to improve graduation rate. Resources and practices were identified to support students at-risk. Professional development was provided to bolster quality research based strategies. On-going monitoring allows for revising and adjusting implementation. In 2008- 2009, the implementation was expanded to the remaining schools. Alabama High School Graduation Exams results revealed areas of improved student outcomes. The two high schools are now out of School Improvement due to their increase in graduation rate. The SPED sub-group has been targeted for the 2010-2011 school year based on AYP data.

The Alabama Department of Education provides assistance to each system in disaggregating data for data profiles. Data is reviewed at the district, school, and individual classroom levels for the purpose of identifying learning gains made individually and collectively. Stakeholders are actively involved in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the school improvement plan. The CIP identifies strengths and allows schools to strategically address individual student and subgroup needs. All personnel are trained and expected to utilize data results from standardized tests, formal and informal assessments and make instructional decisions using this data.

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

Professional development needs are driven by data analysis, specific school needs, surveys, state and federal mandates and reviews which include teacher and student interviews. As indicated by the district analysis, professional development opportunities are provided for the district and school personnel to assist in mastering district goals.

Ongoing professional development/training supports the effective implementation of district instructional initiatives (Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math Science and Technology Initiative, Response to Instruction, Power of I, Safe and Healthy Schools, Active Student Engagement, Reading Across the Curriculum, Differentiated Instruction, Special Education, EL (English Language)). Ongoing professional development for principals/administrators in the implementation of ARI, AMSTI, Response to Instruction, Active Student Engagement, Peer Coaching, Making Middle Grades Work and High School that Work, Educate Alabama, Scheduling, Goal Setting, Formal and Informal Assessments, SharePoint, webinars, Elluminate (aids in the development and implementation of district webinars) sessions

The district initiated the St. Clair County Leadership Team to build leadership and succession opportunities for rising administrators through obtaining a professional learning unit. Professional activities such as book studies (Whatever It Takes, On Common Ground, Change Leadership, and Professional Learning Communities) among

the district and school leaders and collaborative teams facilitate building leadership and change capacity and distributive leadership.

Regularly scheduled staff meetings, weekly newsletters, onsite and offsite professional learning opportunities facilitate professional growth. Schools develop annual professional development plans within the CIP to align with the district professional plan. Technical assistance is provided by curriculum and instruction staff, Alabama ARI and CIP Regional SDE Coaches, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) consultants, Reading Coaches, Technology Integration Specialist, School Improvement Coordinator, and Testing Coordinator.

The district promotes ongoing teacher growth and development through a variety of initiatives: A new teacher induction program is offered through orientation, ongoing mentoring, and local school collaboration. The district provides professional development for teachers, instructional coaches and other staff to support the teaching/learning process. Recent areas of focus include: Educate Alabama, SharePoint, ARI, Harcourt Reading, data analysis, Response to Instruction, DiscoveryEd, common assessments, Elluminate sessions, webinars, Discovery Education, ACCESS (distance learning), APEX, guided math instruction, AMSTI, coteaching with an emphasis on students with disabilities.

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

The district promotes focus on accountability for results through a variety of structures and strategies: Central office staff consistently visits schools to provide support and conducts walkthroughs. The Superintendent, district administrators and principals meet monthly to discuss relevant issues and to hear concerns and suggestions for meeting district goals. Principals are responsible for sharing outcomes with their staff.

Central office staff are responsible for providing leadership for the improvement of teaching, learning, and student achievement. District and school level administrators monitor the implementation of continuous school improvement plans through school and classroom visits monthly to narrow or improve the focus on specific goals, strategies and analysis of impact on student learning. Collaboration and professional dialogues related to improving student achievement are promoted at the district and school levels.

The Superintendent and central office staff meets regularly to discuss issues related to the district improvement plan, to establish district priorities, processes, policies and procedures and address concern as they arise. Board of Education work sessions are held monthly to focus on district progress. Agendas are developed collaboratively by the Superintendent and the Chairman of the Board. District and school goals are communicated and reviewed during board meetings. Board meeting minutes and agendas are posted on the district website. District Communication is provided through the local newspapers, district and schools' websites, newsletters, "Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders Today" school marquees, and blogs. School Report Cards and AYP Reports are published annually by the ALSDE. Schools develop and publish community newsletters. Teachers prepare and disseminate monthly/weekly newsletters, and conduct parent/teacher conferences. Some teachers have classrooms websites which focus on teaching, learning and student achievement. STI Home is a valuable tool for communicating District/School events, happenings, emergencies, weather reports, test administrations, and conducting surveys.

District evaluation instruments for administrators and teachers are designed to support and facilitate

professional growth and improvement focused on the district and school CIP's. Educate Alabama is utilized to evaluate the professional staff of all schools to ensure that quality personnel are in each position.

District instruments are utilized to evaluate support staff of all schools to ensure quality personnel are in each position. All administrators are evaluated on a cycle. Peer reviews including classroom observation and local school walkthroughs support ongoing professional growth and improvement.

Overall Assessment: Operational

The school system implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns most functions of the system and its schools with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the system demonstrates progress in improving student performance, system and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.