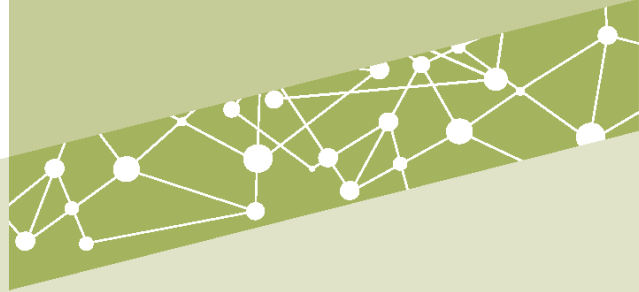


April 2-5, 2018



AdvancED®
Engagement
Review Report



AdvancED® Performance Accreditation

» **Results for:**

Franklin Special School District
Franklin, Tennessee

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
AdvancED Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review	3
AdvancED Continuous Improvement System.....	4
Continuous Improvement Journey Narrative.....	4
AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results	5
Leadership Capacity Domain	5
Learning Capacity Domain	6
Resource Capacity Domain	7
Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) Results.....	7
eleot® Narrative.....	9
Findings.....	11
Powerful Practices.....	11
Opportunities for Improvement	13
Improvement Priorities	14
Accreditation Recommendation and Index of Educational Quality™ (IEQ™).....	14
Conclusion Narrative	15
Next Steps	16
Team Roster	16

Introduction

AdvancED Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

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

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

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

Stakeholder Groups	Number
School Board	4
Director of Schools	1
Administrators	26
Instructional Staff	92
Support Staff	18
Students	99
Parents	66
Community Partners	18
Total	324

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

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

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

AdvancED Continuous Improvement System

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

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

Continuous Improvement Journey Narrative

Data Collection and Quality
 Franklin Special School District operated from a strategic plan established for the purpose of increasing the overall effectiveness and making a positive measurable impact, thereby creating “Excellence in teaching and learning for all.” The framework of the plan was the product of both quantitative and qualitative data collection through aggregation of student achievement results, comparisons of system results with those of neighboring systems and with the state as a whole, survey data and community input. While the larger framework of the plan was constant, objectives were modified from year to year based on data results. Data analysis intervals combined both annual summative and more frequent formative collection. Internal and external stakeholder data were all represented in data sources, and not simply through surveys. The system gathered input from the entire community. Operational data, e.g., those relating to the physical plant, capital equipment, personnel, transportation, etc., were also gathered and tracked over time.

Academic data included a variety of sources, notably the Tennessee State Report Card including promotion rates, attendance rates, discipline data, and demographic data. Other sources included results of benchmark assessments, and the system and school improvement plans. Many of these sources provided longitudinal results, as well as comparative data.

Student data included key questions in climate surveys, lists of recognitions, awards, incentives, walkthrough data, tracking of numbers of students in various programs, attendance rates and discipline information.

Human Capital data included performance appraisal data, records from professional learning initiatives, comparative salary information, teacher absences, pertinent questions on climate surveys.

Systems data included capital outlay records, budgets, written policies and procedures, workers’ compensation information, data on parent-teacher conferences and school nutrition data.

The data sources appeared reliable, lending themselves to tracking of specific progress toward meeting objectives, as outlined in the strategic plan. There was sufficient evidence that the data collected were helpful for most of the goals and objectives within the strategic plan. In addition, the system benchmarked itself in relation to the state averages for tracking its improvement efforts. Overall, the data collected appeared to be useful and manageable, without resulting in data overload for stakeholders or distraction from key tasks by the demands of data collection.

Data Analysis and Application

The system had established policies and procedures for analysis of data and development of strategic goals. Strategic planning best practice mandated that fiscal resources be allocated for enactment of planning processes, including data collection. Each component of the plan specified funding sources for the specific objectives. Continuous improvement goals and routines for data collection, analysis, and monitoring had become part of the professional culture of the Franklin Special School District, uniting both system and school leadership.

Improvement Capacity and Implementation

School improvement plans and implementation processes aligned with the system plan. The system had provided evidence of the impact of the plan in each area. One feature of the student achievement aspects of the plan was comparison of system performance in relation to state averages. Franklin Special School District compared very favorably to state averages for student performance. The continuous improvement process in place represented a systematic and systemic collection of routines that could provide meaningful information to all stakeholders.

As a result, the system had demonstrated that it was committed to continuous improvement through the evidence provided regarding the collection, analysis and use of data to inform instructional and organizational decisions. Discussions with leadership, staff, students and parents corroborated that the process had been utilized with fidelity.

AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results

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

Leadership Capacity Domain

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

Leadership Capacity Standards		Rating
1.1	The system commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners.	Meets Expectations

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

Learning Capacity Domain

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

Learning Capacity Standards		Rating
2.1	Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the system.	Meets Expectations
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving.	Emerging
2.3	The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs and skills needed for success.	Meets Expectations
2.4	The system has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers that support their educational experiences.	Emerging
2.5	Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.	Exceeds Expectations
2.6	The system implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices.	Exceeds Expectations
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the system's learning expectations.	Meets Expectations
2.8	The system provides programs and services for learners' educational future and career planning.	Emerging

Learning Capacity Standards		Rating
2.9	The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners.	Emerging
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.	Meets Expectations
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.	Exceeds Expectations
2.12	The system implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.	Exceeds Expectations

Resource Capacity Domain

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

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

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®)

Results

The eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) is a learner-centric classroom observation tool that comprises 28 items organized in seven environments aligned with the AdvancED Standards. The eleot provides useful, relevant, structured, and quantifiable data on the extent to which students are engaged in activities and/or demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and/or dispositions that are conducive to effective learning.

Classroom observations are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes. Results from eleot are reported on a scale of one to four based on the degree and quality of the engagement.

eleot® Observations	
Total Number of eleot® Observations	53
Environments	Rating
Equitable Learning Environment	3.25
Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs	2.72
Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	3.87
Learners are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner	3.96
Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions	2.47
High Expectations Environment	3.26
Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher	3.43
Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	3.45
Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work	2.96
Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	3.15
Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning	3.32
Supportive Learning Environment	3.69
Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful	3.57
Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	3.55
Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks	3.77
Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher	3.89
Active Learning Environment	3.25
Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and the teacher predominate	3.49
Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences	2.77
Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities	3.60
Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments	3.15
Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	3.09
Learners monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored	2.77
Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work	3.45
Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content	3.43
Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed	2.72
Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.61
Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other	3.89
Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others	3.74
Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another	3.40

eleot® Observations	
Total Number of eleot® Observations	53
Environments	Rating
Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions	3.43
Digital Learning Environment	1.84
Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	2.23
Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	1.70
Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and/or work collaboratively for learning	1.60

eleot® Narrative

A highlight of every Engagement Review visit is the opportunity for the team to conduct classroom observations. The visits provide evidence of the Standards applied to practice as viewed through student engagement, not teacher practice. Fifty-three classroom observations of a minimum of twenty minutes each took place during the visit to Franklin Special School District. Learners at all grade levels, kindergarten through eight, and all discipline areas were observed. Each of the observations was assessed through the use of the eleot™ tool, as organized around seven environments.

The highest rated area was the Supportive Learning Environment, with a rating of 3.69 on a 4-point scale. The items within this environment that received the highest ratings were those of students demonstrating positive relationships with their teachers (3.89) and learners being supported to understand and accomplish tasks (3.77). While items in this area were rated highly, fewer opportunities were observed of learners taking risks without fear of negative feedback. Through interviews with students and teachers it was clear that strong relationships had been intentionally established that impact on achievement. Students were expected and encouraged to help each other as noted in a class where one learner assisted another who was having difficulties while the teacher was engaged in guided work. In a first-grade math lesson, students sat on the carpet in front of the Promethean board and individually chose one of 4 math shapes they thought did not belong with the others. As each student gave an answer, other students would raise their hands if they disagreed. When called upon by the teacher, a student would say, "I disagree because of these reasons," and then calmly refute their classmate's previous response. Students were clearly supportive of each other and comfortable voicing their answers or giving their reasons for disagreement. All students were courteous and listened attentively to whoever gave his/her oral answers.

The Well-Managed Learning Environment was next highest, with a rating of 3.61. The respectful interactions among teachers and peers (3.89), as well as understanding and following rules (3.74), were the most evident elements in this area. This was consistent with what was learned in interviews with conducted with staff and students. There were few situations of students needing corrective action or redirection. The movement of students in hallways during passing times was respectful and orderly. The utilization of centers in the elementary schools appeared to generally operate smoothly, even as students rotated through different standard-based stations. Learners displayed positive behavior and respect for rituals and routines across all settings and school environments. displayed positive behavior and respect for rituals and routines across all settings and school environments. In a kindergarten classroom it was remarkable to observe the orderly transitions of students from whole group work to their small group stations. The teacher made learning fun with her animation, expressions and voice imitations. She had on her chef hat and had the students put on theirs as they proceeded to their work sites in a business-like way.

The High Expectations Environment received a rating of 3.26. The highest rated items were learners being engaged in challenging, but attainable, activities (3.45) and striving to meet or were able to articulate high expectations established by themselves and/or their teacher (3.43). Lowest rated was learners' ability to describe high quality work (2.96). High expectations for achievement was discussed in the Improvement Journey Presentation and

particularly noted in interviews with leadership, staff and parents. An observation took place of a fourth-grade grammar surgery center, where students had to “perform” procedures on various sentence structures. Students were dressed in surgical garb with the “surgery” involving a test of their skills with sentence structures.

Tied for fourth highest was a rating of 3.25 for the Active Learning Environment. The item rated highest was that of observed instances of learners actively engaged in their activities (3.60). Students and staff were frequently observed interacting respectfully with one another (3.49). Connections of content to real-life experiences were not widely observed (2.77). Where connections were made, student interest and participation appeared at a higher level. An art class was observed in which students were working on their projects individually and in small groups. The teacher was reading a book to the class as they worked. While there was great student engagement, there was also quiet, respectful interactions with the teacher and other tablemates.

Also tied for fourth and rated at 3.25 the Equitable Learning Environment. Students were treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner (3.96). They had equal access to resources and support (3.87). However, few examples of differentiated instruction within classes were noted (2.72). In interviews with staff the team was not able to identify systemic strategies to employ differentiation. All students in fifth-grade honors social studies had their own Apple computers on which to conduct research regarding notable individuals from World War I. Students conducted individual research as the teacher circulated from group to group. While doing their research, students collaborated via Google Classroom, as they prepared of a slide on each person being researched.

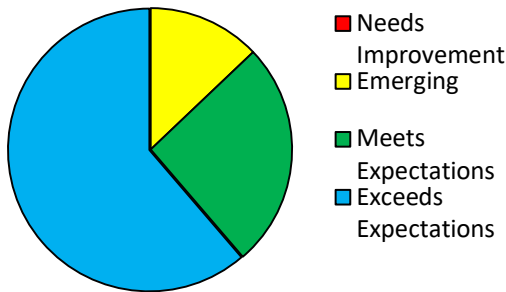
The Progress Monitoring Environment average rating was 3.09. The highest rated individual items were those of learners receiving/responding to feedback (3.45), and learners demonstrating and/or verbalizing understanding of their lesson (3.43). Learners being able to explain how their work was assessed was the lowest rated (2.96). There were many situations in elementary classes where teachers were observed checking in with students for understanding and then moving on or re-teaching, as indicated by the inquiries. A middle school class was observed in which students had to design their own school and present their work to the class. Classmates were expected to critique and provide feedback.

The Digital Learning Environment received the Franklin lowest rating of 1.84. The highest rated item in this area received a 2.23. This item noted students using technology where devices were being used to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning. The experience of this environment being the lowest rated in AdvancED reviews reflected the that, although schools generally continued to invest substantially in technology, the integration of it as a learning tool continued to be a journey. The system invested wisely in infrastructure, equipment, applications and support staff to move this environment along. While many examples of teachers using technology to enhance instruction, few observations of student use were noted. However, one second-grade class was observed using Chromebooks to conduct research on a planet upon which their group had chosen to focus. The students exhibited good understanding of how to use the devices.

Observations of students engaged in their coursework provided a wonderful opportunity for the team to reach an overall assessment of whether the artifact and interview data that had been gathered accurately reflected the quality of learning that existed in Franklin Special School District. The team noted that students were provided with well-managed learning environments that were supportive of their learning. Observations provided evidence that the system’s focus on continuous improvement was put to practice in the classrooms by staff and learners.

Findings

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



Rating	Number of Standards
Needs Improvement	0
Emerging	4
Meets Expectations	8
Exceeds Expectations	19

Powerful Practices

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

Powerful Practice #1

The Board of Education (BOE) of the Franklin Special School District has established and ensures adherence to a code of ethics and board policies, which protect, support and respect the autonomy of the system and school leadership to accomplish the goals set forth for the system. (Standards 1.4, 1.5)

Primary Standard: 1.4

The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support system effectiveness.

Evidence:

During the team’s interviews with the BOE, their passion and commitment for the education of their students was extremely evident. They spoke with knowledge of the system’s goals, accomplishments and challenges. They were unanimous in their expectation that they set policy and allow the superintendent to run the system. Board members readily spoke of their roles and responsibilities. The school leadership groups confirmed that board members had been visible in the schools and at functions. However, they were clear to state that the visits were out of interest and not to interfere. One board member commented, “We do not micro-manage. We don’t run the schools, but we make sure the schools are run well.” Through a review of meeting agendas, minutes and a meeting observation the team noted that the board operated effectively and efficiently. Board members commented that they regularly took part in professional learning beyond that which was required by the state.

Powerful Practice #2

The leadership of Franklin Special School District has effectively implemented outstanding practices in support of excellence in teaching and learning.

Primary Standard: 1.7

Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.

Evidence:

Through interviews with BOD members, the team was informed that they had provided the Director of Schools (the Director) the autonomy to lead the system, and they supported his decisions and those of his leadership team. In his remarks and interview, the Director shared his expectations for his leadership team. It was clear that he carefully selected people for his key roles and further extended autonomy to their positions. The Improvement Journey presentation by system leaders confirmed that leadership was a collaborate process in Franklin. The presentation provided the team with more than an overview of what had been occurring, but a vision into where the system needed to go, as it embraced the commitment to continuous improvement. That the Director and his Associate Director of Schools for Teaching and Learning conducted regular walk-throughs with principals was evidence that leadership support and development by him extended throughout the system. This was corroborated by principals and leadership in other operations. School administrators were visible and engaged in and around the school, community and at activities. A positive school culture and climate was recognized by the team throughout the organization. In their interviews teachers, students, parents and community members identified strong leadership as an important factor in why the Franklin Special School District students performed so well in comparison with state rankings. Stakeholders told the team that they felt valued and respected by leadership at all levels.

Powerful Practice #3

The Franklin Special School District has systematically and systemically developed and implemented an exemplary curriculum that is aligned to the Tennessee Academic Standards and best practices. (Standards 2.5, 2.6)

Primary Standard: 2.6

The system implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices.

Evidence:

Through the Improvement Journey presentation, the team got an excellent overview of the deliberate and thorough process the system had embarked upon to assure that curriculum across the system was research based and supported the Tennessee standards. The team noted the provision of high-quality pacing documents provided direction on instructional expectations, mapping out instruction of standards throughout the school year. In interviews with school leadership groups the consistency of curriculum and instruction came through very clearly. The team was impressed to learn of the collaborative development of Power Standards involving school- and grade-level representation across the system. Teachers corroborated that both vertical and horizontal alignment takes place throughout the system. The varied grade levels at the schools did not interfere with the maintenance of alignment. There were many opportunities for staff to share and collaborate informally, as well as formally in their learning groups. System and school leaders shared how data are used to make decisions at all levels, for the organization and for individual learners. Classroom observations confirmed that the Franklin learning culture is systemic. What makes this a Powerful Practice is the consistency and fidelity with which teaching and learning took place throughout the system.

Powerful Practice #4

The Franklin Special School District has developed an exemplary process to attract, recruit and retain qualified personnel who are supported through its induction, mentoring and coaching programs.

Primary Standard: 3.3

The system provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Evidence:

Through the system's Improvement Journey presentation, the team learned of the extensive staff support strategies that have been established to assure that students are provided with highly qualified instructional and support personnel. Artifacts corroborated the expectations and opportunities staff have to be ever growing into

the Franklin ways. Interviews with BOE members confirmed that they continually encourage every effort be made to hire only the best. The team was able to view a board meeting in which numerous student and staff recognitions took place and learned that such acknowledgements of excellence are a regular and routine practice at board meetings. Leadership at the system and school levels shared that new staff were provided a formal induction program, extensive mentoring and coaching to support their growth. Teachers confirmed how the system invested in all staff, recognizing that well prepared and committed employees paid dividends in student achievement.

Powerful Practice #5

Franklin Special School District allocates and proactively manages human, material and fiscal resources to support system needs and priorities both in the present and long-term in order to ensure high levels of student performance. (Standards 3.7, 3.8)

Primary Standard: 3.8

The system allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the system's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Evidence:

Through a review of financial documents and the Improvement Journey presentation the team learned the system employed a documented, deliberate and collaborative process to assure that human, material and fiscal resources were allocated equitably based upon demonstrated needs. Interviews with system and school leaders confirmed that processes and practices were clearly known and administered to assure that all students and staff had access to the resources that support excellence in teaching and learning. Interviews with maintenance and transportation supervisors corroborated that the system had long-range plans in anticipation of large expenditures, such as bus replacements and roof repairs, in addition to ongoing facility upkeep. Through leadership interviews it was learned of the deliberate process used in determining staffing needs to assure that every student had the instructional and support resources needed to reach his/her potential. That the system does deliver on its commitments was evident in a review of the SQF reports and the consistency of eleot™ rating on classroom observations.

Opportunities for Improvement

Opportunities for Improvement are those actions that will guide and direct institutions to specific areas that are worthy of additional attention.

Opportunity for Improvement #1

Establish and nurture a learning culture for students that engages and promotes project-based learning, collaborative problem-solving and inquiry learning to develop students' critical thinking and self-reflection.

Primary Standard: 2.2

The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving.

Evidence:

The team learned through the Improvement Journey presentation that the system and its schools were intent on the creation of positive learning cultures for students. Through interviews with students and teachers, the team determined that project-based learning took place in some classrooms but was not an imbedded instructional strategy. Those interviews also indicated minimal collaborative problem-solving and inquiry learning being practiced. Classroom observation eleot™ results indicated some of the concepts related to these strategies to have lower ratings.

Opportunity for Improvement #2

Develop and implement opportunities for differentiated instruction on a regular and frequent basis within classrooms to address the needs and interests of individual learners.

Primary Standard: 2.9

The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners.

Evidence:

Interviews with teachers indicated that some beacons of exemplary differentiation practices exist, but those were not evident during eleot™ observations. Leaders agreed that the wide availability of technology opened the door of opportunity for increased differentiation; however, the use of technologically-driven worksheets did not meet that need. Examples of student work displayed in the hallways and classrooms indicated that there was a variety in student responses to singular assignments, but not a differentiation of those assignments. The team did learn through artifacts and in interviews with leaders that the system supports professional learning, which could be a vehicle to promoting differentiation on a larger scale.

Improvement Priorities

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

Improvement Priority #1

Design, implement and monitor a comprehensive student advocacy program that provides consistent advisory, mentorship, support and career planning for every student across the school system. (Standards 2.4, 2.8)

Primary Standard: 2.8

The system provides programs and services for learners' educational future and career planning.

Evidence:

Through the Improvement Journey presentation and interviews with stakeholders, the team found that some programs and processes were in place to provide behavioral support to students as needed, including those available through partnerships with community mental health agencies. Interviews with school leaders revealed that looping and informal assignment of mentors occurred in some schools. System and school personnel, along with community partners and parents, expressed the belief that no child should be allowed to "fall through the cracks." Proactive implementation of a student advocacy program should maximize positive relationships and support for all students from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Not only should an advocacy program focus on students in need, it but should assist all students to develop the confidence to excel and to plan well for future education and career pursuits.

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

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

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

Institution IEQ	360.98
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Conclusion Narrative

Franklin Special School District had taken deliberate and strategic actions to ensure that every child, every day was being prepared and achieving success for his/her future through its vision, “Excellence in Teaching and Learning for All.” This was the foundation of the positive and nurturing school climate and family atmosphere which permeated throughout the system. The positive culture nurtured by the vision had provided great community support for the system. During the interviews of system leadership, the Director of Schools stated, “We don’t accept mediocrity.” This statement was very evident as the team conducted interviews, visited schools and classrooms, and examined artifacts. References to the idea that, “We are a community,” and “We are a family,” were heard in many settings.

A clear, deliberate and transparent connection between fiscal responsibility and the direction of the system was substantiated through the Director of School’s overview, interviews with leadership, review of artifacts and site observations. Safety was a top priority throughout the system, as evidenced by School Resource Officers (SROs) at each school, security systems, surveillance cameras and locked entries. The team ascertained through surveys and interviews including teachers, parents and students that, “Our schools are truly safe places for learning.”

The team determined that the system had many strengths and noted the following as some of those observed. The Response to Intervention (RtI) strategies provided targeted support for the critical developmental of identified students. Parents and students praised the quality of communication efforts of leadership and staff. Collaborative efforts between parents, schools and community supported the “Nook” and other initiatives that provided for the needs of students and families. Families were very familiar with such initiatives.

The system implementation of the 1:1 technology had the potential to establish a pathway to improve students’ ability to critically analyze information sources, conduct research, solve problems, work collaboratively, and communicate with peers and teachers. The use of technology increased opportunities for learning and helped prepare the students for the real world.

Leadership opportunities were afforded to the staff through an innovative initiative, the Leadership Internship Program. This job-embedded professional learning opportunity clearly provided evidence of the system’s intent to build and retain leaders from within.

The system had established partnerships with the City and County, as well as the Chamber of Commerce and other community entities who helped leverage resources to the greater achievement of students and effectiveness of the organization.

Another commendable practice, School Walk Arouds, began in 2014 and provided opportunities for principals to get “real time” feedback from the Director and Associate Director of Schools.

In the midst of the dynamic landscape of 21st Century education, the team identified some areas to address in order to ensure the system would continue to deliver on its mission in the ever-changing world.

The system would benefit from strategically hiring a more diverse workforce to more closely mirror the student population. In addition to a more diverse workforce, it would also be desirable to include representative members changing population dynamic in leadership and advisory positions.

While a beginning effort was in place, continued attention to incorporating critical thinking skills and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) related activities would help to improve rigor and depth of knowledge for students at all levels.

By addressing the Improvement Priority cited in this report and following the system's continuous improvement plan, the Franklin Special School District will achieve a higher level of system performance and function more effectively to the greater fulfillment of its vision, "Excellence in Teaching and Learning for All."

The Engagement Review Team is grateful for the exceptional preparation done by the system leadership and staff for the visit. The System and School Quality Factors reports were well developed with supporting documentation, reflecting the thorough process the system and its schools had conducted prior to the visit. The transparency with which both the achievements and challenges of the system were presented is gratefully appreciated.

Next Steps

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

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

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

Team Roster

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

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
John Sedey Lead Evaluator	<p>John Sedey has been a teacher, school and district administrator, and educational consultant. Since retiring from public school administration, he has been in private practice, primarily consulting to career and technical education, alternative schools, and charter schools. He has provided leadership in program planning and development, student systems, environmental education, assessment and testing, state and federal program administration, student support systems and education-business partnerships. John has been a senior developer for one of the eleven New American Schools Development grants. In his advocacy for college and career readiness, he has consulted to federal and state departments of education. John holds a bachelor's degree in history and business, a master's degree in education administration, and has done additional graduate work, including that as a Bush Public School Executive Fellow. He has led more than a hundred AdvancED reviews in 28 states since 2008.</p>
Dr. Larrissa Henderson Associate Lead Evaluator	<p>Dr. Larrissa Henderson currently serves as the Director of Pupil Services for the Oak Ridge Schools and has served in this position since 2002. She is a graduate of Fulton High School, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and Roane State Community College in Oak Ridge. She taught in the Knox County Schools for 17 years serving students in the 4th and 5th grade and served as an administrator for 9 years in Knox County before going to Woodland Elementary School in Oak Ridge Schools as its principal for 4 years. Her tenure with the Oak Ridge Schools includes her current position as Director of Pupil Services. She has been in the Oak Ridge School system for 19 years. Her role as the Director of Pupil Services cover many, varied responsibilities. Dr. Henderson has also served as Interim Assistant Superintendent twice as the system searched for candidates. Her achievements and awards are numerous and most recently include her induction into her high school alma mater, Fulton High School's Wall of Fame. Dr. Henderson is also certified as a Lead Reviewer for AdvancED and has lead numerous accreditation reviews for AdvancED in Tennessee as well as serving as team member on accreditation teams in other states. Dr. Henderson is also certified as an AdvancED STEM Lead Reviewer and has served on several teams as well as the Lead Reviewer. She was instrumental in the AdvancED district accreditation of the Oak Ridge School System and the AdvancED STEM certification of all schools in the same district. Her educational experience spans 46+ years. Dr. Henderson's degrees include BS in Elementary Education, MS in Reading Education, Ed. S in Administration and Supervision, doctorate in Leadership Studies – all conferred from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and an Associate's degree in Paralegal Studies from Roane State Community College, Oak Ridge.</p>
Melanie Dickerson	<p>Melanie Dickerson is the Elementary Supervisor for the Robertson County School District located in Springfield, Tennessee. In that position, she coordinates the pre-kindergarten through grade five curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes for thirteen elementary schools. Mrs. Dickerson holds a Master of Education degree in Administration and Supervision with a focus in curriculum, instruction, and assessment from Trevecca Nazarene University. Her Bachelor of Science degree from Middle Tennessee State University is in Elementary Education. Mrs. Dickerson has experience as an elementary and middle grades teacher as well as elementary grades assistant principal, principal, and supervisor. She chaired the SACS CASI Leadership Team for two district schools several years ago and has served on several AdvancED Engagement Reviews at both the school and district levels.</p>

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Dr. Gene Johnson	<p>Gene Johnson is an Assistant Professor of Education at King University in Bristol, Tennessee. He has been a middle school teacher, elementary school principal, high school principal and assistant superintendent in several K-12 school systems in Tennessee and New York. He holds a BS and MA in Health and Physical Education, an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from East Tennessee State University, and earned a post-doctoral Ed.S. in Special Education from the University of Tennessee. He earned Career Ladder III recognition as an Elementary Principal and was nominated for the National Distinguished Principal Award. He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Delta Kappa and Golden Key Honor Societies. Schools under his leadership were recognized for Educational Programs of Excellence five times by the Tennessee School Boards Association. Dr. Johnson has served as a trainer both in curriculum mapping and for principal development in the TEAM administrator evaluation rubric. He has served on many accreditation teams for school and district AdvancED accreditation, having chaired or served as a consultant on more than 40 review visits. He has authored several journal articles and made numerous presentations to local, state and national conferences. He presently serves as a member of the Tennessee State Council for AdvancED.</p>
Dr. Martha LaCroix	<p>Dr. Martha LaCroix invested over three decades in Alabama public education, serving as a district-wide Director of Accountability Programs, a high school Assistant Principal of Instruction, and a high school English teacher. She has extensive experience in assessment, accountability, curriculum, teacher evaluation, classroom management, and human resources. She has provided leadership and service in both internal and external AdvancED/SACS accreditation activities since the early 1980's. Dr. LaCroix currently serves on the AdvancED Alabama Council. She is a lead evaluator for school review teams, associate lead evaluator for district review teams, and team member for both district and school review teams. Dr. LaCroix holds B.S. and M.A. degrees in secondary education with a content major in English from The University of Alabama; an Ed.S. in educational leadership from The University of Alabama at Birmingham; and the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree in educational leadership and curriculum from The University of Alabama/UAB joint doctoral program. She was certified as a trainer through Vanderbilt University's COMP (Classroom Organization and Management Program) project and also served as an adjunct instructor for The University of Alabama at Birmingham.</p>



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About AdvancED

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

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