

Report of the External Review Team for Chickamauga City School System

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Introduction

The External Review is an integral component of AdvancED Performance Accreditation and provides the institution with a comprehensive evaluation guided by the results of diagnostic instruments, in-depth review of data and documentation, and the professional judgment of a team of qualified and highly trained evaluators. A series of diagnostic instruments examines the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of leadership to effect continuous improvement, and the degree to which the institution optimizes its use of available resources to facilitate and support student success. The results of this evaluation are represented in the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) and through critical observations, namely, Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

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

Institutions seeking to gain or retain accreditation must meet AdvancED Standards specific to their institution type, demonstrate acceptable levels of student performance and the continuous improvement of student performance, and provide evidence of stakeholder engagement and satisfaction. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the conditions, processes, and practices within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness.

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

The AdvancED External Review Team uses AdvancED Standards, associated indicators and criteria related to student performance and stakeholder engagement to guide its evaluation. The Team examines adherence to standards as well as how the institution functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics expected of an accredited institution. The Standards, indicators and related criteria are evaluated using indicator-specific performance levels. The Team rates each indicator and criterion on a scale of 1 to 4. The final scores assigned to the indicators and criteria represent the average of the External Review Team members' individual ratings.

The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation. It energizes and equips the institution's leadership and stakeholders to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that

may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. External Review is a rigorous process that includes the in-depth examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with all stakeholder groups, and extensive observations of learning, instruction, and operations.

Use of Diagnostic Tools

A key to examining the institution is the design and use of diagnostic tools that reveal the effectiveness with which an institution creates conditions and implements processes and practices that impact student performance and success. In preparation for the External Review the institution conducted a Self Assessment that applied the standards and criteria for accreditation. The institution provided evidence to support its conclusions vis a vis organizational effectiveness in ensuring acceptable and improving levels of student performance.

- an indicator-based tool that connects the specific elements of the criteria to evidence gathered by the team;
- a student performance analytic that examines the quality of assessment instruments used by the institution, the integrity of the administration of the assessment to students, the quality of the learning results including the impact of instruction on student learning at all levels of performance, and the equity of learning that examines the results of student learning across all demographics;
- a stakeholder engagement instrument that examines the fidelity of administration and results of perception surveys seeking the perspective of students, parents, and teachers;
- a state-of-the-art, learner-centric observation instrument, the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) that quantifies students' engagement, attitudes and dispositions organized in 7 environments: Equitable Learning, High Expectations, Supportive Learning, Active Learning, Progress Monitoring and Feedback, Well-Managed Learning, and Digital Learning. All evaluators must be trained, reach acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability, and certified to use this research-based and validated instrument.

The External Review Team's findings and critical observations are shared in this report through the IEQ™ results as well as through the identification of Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

Index of Education Quality

In the past, accreditation reviews resulted in an accreditation recommendation on status. Labels such as advised, warned, probation, or all clear were used to describe the status of a school relative to the AdvancED Standards and other evaluative criteria. Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, AdvancED introduced a new framework to describe the results of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduced an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™). The IEQ™ comprises three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the capacity of leadership to guide the institution toward the achievement of its

vision and strategic priorities; and 3) use of resources to support and optimize learning. Therefore, your institution will no longer receive an accreditation status. Instead, your institution will be accredited with an IEQ™ score. In the case where an institution is failing to meet established criteria, the accreditation will be under review thereby requiring frequent monitoring and demonstrated improvement.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and associated indicators, the analysis of student performance, and the engagement and feedback of stakeholders. Within each domain institutions can connect to the individual performance levels that are applied in support of the AdvancED Standards and evaluative criteria. Within the performance levels are detailed descriptors that serve as a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report and building on their Powerful Practices, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Opportunity for Improvement and Improvement Priority as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected indicator(s).

The IEQ™ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. An institution's IEQ™ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Subsequent actions for improvement and evidence that these have had a positive impact will raise the institution's IEQ™ score.

Benchmark Data

Throughout this report, AdvancED provides benchmark data for each indicator and for each component of the evaluative criteria. These benchmark data represent the overall averages across the entire AdvancED Network for your institution type. Thus, the AdvancED Network average provides an extraordinary opportunity for institutions to understand their context on a global scale rather than simply compared to a state, region, or country.

It is important to understand that the AdvancED Network averages are provided primarily to serve as a tool for continuous improvement and not as a measure of quality in and of itself. Benchmark data, when wisely employed, have a unique capacity to help institutions identify and leverage their strengths and areas of improvement to significantly impact student learning.

Powerful Practices

A key to continuous improvement is the institution's ability to learn from and build upon its most effective and impactful practices. Such practices serve as critical leverage points necessary to guide, support and ensure continuous improvement. A hallmark of the accreditation process is its commitment to identifying with evidence, the conditions, processes and practices that are having the most significant impact on student performance and institutional effectiveness. Throughout this report, the External Review Team has captured and defined Powerful Practices. These noteworthy practices are essential to the institution's effort to continue its journey of improvement.

Opportunities for Improvement

Every institution can and must improve no matter what levels of performance it has achieved in its past. During the process of the review, the External Review Team identified areas of improvement where the institution is meeting the expectations for accreditation but in the professional judgment of the Team these are Opportunities for Improvement that should be considered by the institution. Using the criteria described in the corresponding rubric(s) to the Opportunity for Improvement, the institution can identify what elements of practice must be addressed to guide the improvement.

Improvement Priorities

The expectations for accreditation are clearly defined in a series of the rubric-based AdvancED Standards, indicators and evaluative criteria focused on the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of the institution to be guided by effective leadership, and the allocation and use of resources to support student learning. As such, the External Review Team reviewed, analyzed and deliberated over significant bodies of evidence provided by the institution and gathered by the Team during the process. In the professional judgment of the Team as well as the results of the diagnostic process, the Team defined, with rationale, Improvement Priorities. The priorities must be addressed in a timely manner by the institution to retain and improve their accreditation performance as represented by the IEQ™. Improvement Priorities serve as the basis for the follow-up and monitoring process that will begin upon conclusion of the External Review. The institution must complete and submit an Accreditation Progress Report within two years of the External Review. The report must include actions taken by the institution to address the Improvement Priorities along with the corresponding evidence and results. The IEQ™ will be recalculated by AdvancED upon review of the evidence and results associated with the Improvement Priorities.

The Review

Interactions between the Chickamauga City Schools Assistant Superintendent and the Lead Evaluator began December 6, 2016 and continued on a periodic basis throughout the process. These interactions involved several email exchanges and phone calls and focused primarily on the various processes and expectations of the External Review.

In preparation for the External Review, the Lead Evaluator and Associate Lead Evaluator had a phone conversation about the logistics of the External Review, the areas that each felt prepared to facilitate, and general requirements of the upcoming visit. Additionally, to ensure that team members were prepared, a virtual team meeting was held on January 11, 2017 with the team as a whole and then follow-up email messages were directed to individual team members to answer any questions and to ensure that all team members were fully prepared for the visit. Prior to the on-site visit, each team member reviewed the available evidence for each Indicator so that an initial rating might be determined. Round 1 ratings of each Indicator were received by the Lead Evaluator by Saturday, January 28 so that a team average for each Indicator might be calculated for the team's first work session which began on Sunday, January 29 at 4:00 PM. Evaluation of all available evidence continued right up to the time the Exit Report was completed and presented to the superintendent.

The External Review Team was composed of five educators. The Associate Lead and two other team members were from Georgia. Another team member was from Florida, and the Lead Evaluator was from Kentucky. Cumulatively, team members had more than 100 years of experience teaching and leading in P - 12 schools as well as teaching undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral education students. The team member's administrative experiences includes school-level, district-level, and college-level experience.

Early Sunday evening the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent Director of Curriculum and Instruction met with the External Review Team at which time the Superintendent provided an overview of the System. The overview included a discussion of the rich history of Chickamauga City Schools and the challenges and opportunities the System currently faces. Following the superintendent's overview, the group dismissed to a local restaurant. This time provided opportunity for Chickamauga City Schools personnel and members of the External Review Team to have more informal conversations regarding the school district and the External Review process.

Monday, the first full day of the on-site visit, the External Review team conducted eleot™ observations in Chickamauga Elementary School, Gordon Lee Middle School, and Gordon Lee High School. The team was divided into small groups ensuring that observations were completed in each of the district's schools. After spending a full day in the schools, the Team returned to the hotel for a multi-hour work session that involved analysis of the eleot™ data, discussion of evidence gathered while in the schools, and how the day's experiences had helped to inform the Team's ratings for each of the Indicators.

Tuesday's work focused primarily on interviews conducted at the Central Office. The day began with an hour-long interview of the superintendent followed by the school and district leadership team's presentation that focused on the Standards and Indicators. Next on the agenda were board interviews during which Team members interviewed four of the five members of the Board. With three of the board members having more than 25 years of experience serving on the board, members reflected on where the school system was, its current condition, and future opportunities.

Following a short lunch break, the External Review Team interviewed principals. The Team's questions focused on the principals' instructional leadership skills, professional learning opportunities for teachers, and instructional practices expected of teachers. The Team also was keen on learning how data were used to guide classroom and school-level decisions. Tuesday's work at the Central Office ended with conversations involving parents. The 25 parents in attendance represented all facets of the school system including the elementary, middle, and high schools. Questions to parents covered a wide range of topics from school safety, opportunities to participate in decision-making, instructional program offerings, school culture, and technology. Parents seemed to be forthright in their responses, not focusing on one issue of concern or success, and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide some feedback.

After returning to the hotel, the External Review Team held another multi-hour work session during which district-provided evidence was examined, eleot™ ratings were reviewed, and notes from various interviews were discussed. In short, the substantial amount of available evidence allowed the External Review Team to

triangulate the data and once again rate each Indicator. Additionally, Improvement Priorities and Powerful Practices were drafted.

Wednesday morning activities included further review of evidence and revision of the Improvement Priorities and Powerful Practices. After each team member submitted the final ratings for the Indicators, the Index of Educational Quality (IEQ) was calculated. With the Indicator ratings finalized and the IEQ calculated, the Exit Report was developed in preparation for the meeting with the Superintendent. Shortly after a working lunch, the Lead Evaluator and Associate Lead Evaluators conducted a meeting with the Superintendent. The Exit Report was presented and a brief explanation for each of the report's components provided. The day ended with a public meeting during which the Lead Evaluator presented the exit report to the members of the board of education, the superintendent, and the district and school leadership team.

The way district personnel approached the self-study reflected professionalism, an understanding of the External Review process, and an appreciation for suggestions for continuous improvement. Input from a variety of stakeholders was solicited and used to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth. Survey results were analyzed as a way to listen to parents, students and staff. Leadership voiced surprise at a few of the results. For example, 75 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that "Our school's governing body does not interfere with the operation or leadership of our school." The district reported that members of the board of education clearly understand their role as a policy-making body and do not seek to usurp the authority of the superintendent or other district or school leaders. With this understanding, district personnel thought perhaps that parents misunderstood the phrase "governing body," associating it rather with central office leadership. During the parents' interview, parents were asked what they thought the term "governing body" meant. While a sizable number responded that it referred to the board of education, there were more than a few who stated it meant central office administration or the superintendent. Given the variety of responses during the parents' interview, district personnel may be right that at least some of the parental respondents were thinking of someone other than the board of education when responding to the statement, "Our school's governing body does not interfere with the operation or leadership of our school."

The External Review Team wishes to express sincere gratitude to the Chickamauga City Schools Leadership Team, especially the superintendent and assistant superintendent. All requests were met forthright. Meeting areas were well considered, allowing the team to focus on work rather than on logistics. Timelines were respected and evidence was organized in a way that facilitated its review. In summary, district personnel were able to effectively and efficiently organize a comprehensive approach to the External Review process. This made the work of the External Review Team much easier.

The hospitality and gracious manner in which the External Review Team was treated were excellent. The accommodations, meals, and transportation provided made the on-site visit much easier and enjoyable to conduct. The friendly nature of Chickamauga City Schools' employees made the Team's task more pleasant. Certainly, the External Review Team is very appreciative of the kindness and generosity exhibited by the Chickamauga City Schools as a whole.

Stakeholders were interviewed by members of the External Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics

relevant to the institution's effectiveness and student performance. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the External Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Superintendents	1
Board Members	4
Administrators	9
Instructional Staff	48
Support Staff	8
Students	34
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	25
Total	129

Results

Teaching and Learning Impact

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement is the primary expectation of every institution. The relationship between teacher and learner must be productive and effective for student success. The impact of teaching and learning includes an analysis of student performance results, instructional quality, learner and family engagement, support services for student learning, curriculum quality and efficacy, and college and career readiness data. These are all key indicators of an institution's impact on teaching and learning.

A high-quality and effective educational system has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve their highest potential and be prepared for a successful future. The positive influence an effective educator has on learning is a combination of "student motivation, parental involvement" and the "quality of leadership" (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Research also suggests that quality educators must have a variety of quantifiable and intangible characteristics that include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The institution's curriculum and instructional program should develop learners' skills that lead them to think about the world in complex ways (Conley, 2007) and prepare them to have knowledge that extends beyond the academic areas. In order to achieve these goals, teachers must have pedagogical skills as well as content knowledge (Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y., 2010). The acquisition and refinement of teachers' pedagogical skills occur most effectively through collaboration and professional development. These are a "necessary approach to improving teacher quality" (Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S., 2008). According to Marks, Louis, and Printy (2002), staff members who engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective institutions "supports teachers by creating collaborative work environments." Institutional leaders have a responsibility to provide experiences, resources, and time for educators to engage in meaningful professional learning that promotes student learning and educator quality.

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

Institutions with strong improvement processes move beyond anxiety about the current reality and focus on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, i.e., data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, and Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R., 2005). The study also identified six

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

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

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	2.40	2.69
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	2.80	2.49
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.80	2.59
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.60	2.71
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	2.60	2.58
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.40	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	3.00	2.60

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.60	2.97
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	3.80	2.50
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	3.00	2.47
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.60	2.65
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	2.40	2.64

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	2.80	2.66
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	2.40	2.49
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	2.40	2.15
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	2.80	2.50
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	2.80	2.75

Student Performance Diagnostic

The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of

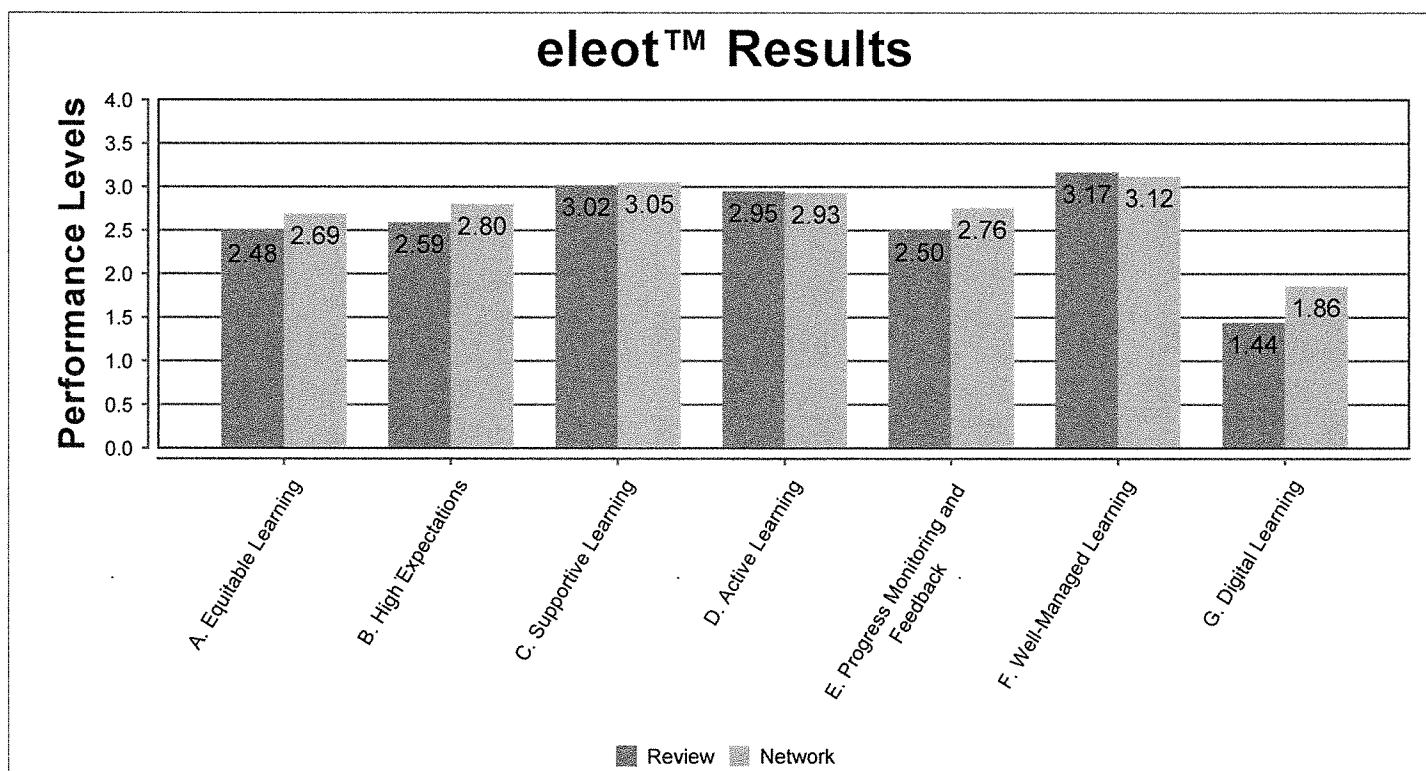
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	4.00	3.33
Test Administration	4.00	3.52
Equity of Learning	3.00	2.54
Quality of Learning	4.00	2.96

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. Every member of the External Review Team is required to be trained and pass a certification exam that establishes inter-rater reliability. Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale (4=very evident; 3=evident; 2=somewhat evident; and 1=not observed). The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in eleot™ as well as benchmark results across the AdvancED Network.



The Diagnostic Review Team completed 49 classroom observations using the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™). The eleot™ is an observation instrument that focuses on student engagement in his or her learning environment and is divided into seven Learning Environments. The Environments are further divided into a total of 30 observable behaviors. Each behavior is rated on a 4-point scale with a rating of 4 indicating that the behavior was very evident, a 3 means that the behavior was evident,

a behavior rated a 2 is somewhat evident, and a 1 ranking means the behavior was not observed.

Team observations included 18 observations at the elementary, 10 observations at the middle and 21 observations at the high school. Content areas observed included all core subjects and a number of specialty courses (e.g., band, art, physical education). Chickamauga City School's highest rated Environment was the Well-Managed Learning Environment with an average rating of 3.17 on a 4-point scale. The second highest environment was the Supportive Learning Environment with an average rating of 3.02, and the third highest environment with an average rating of 2.95 was the Active Learning Environment. The lowest rated Learning Environments included High Expectations (2.59), Progress Monitoring (2.50) and Digital Learning (1.44).

Equitable Learning Environment

Scoring among the lowest of the Learning Environments, the Equitable Learning Environment average score was 2.48 (Advanc-ED average 2.69). The eleot results show that it was evident/very evident in 90 percent of the classrooms that students knew "that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied" (A.3), making this the most frequently observed behavior in this Learning Environment. Similarly, students with "equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support" (A.2) was evident/very evident in 84 percent of classrooms. Team observations revealed that it was evident/very evident in 41 percent of classrooms that the students have "differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs" (A.1). This general idea was reflected in the student survey when only 61 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that "All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs." Finally, rarely (2 percent) was it evident/very evident that students were provided opportunities to learn about their own and others' backgrounds, cultures, and differences (A.4). Given that Chickamauga City Schools perpetuate a culture of family and tradition, the school's leadership team might consider opportunities for students to learn about the variety of cultures students will experience once they graduate from high school.

High Expectations Learning Environment

With an average score of 2.59 (AEN 2.80) Some items in the High Expectations Learning Environment were evident/very evident in most classrooms, (i.e., Environment B.1, "Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher" at 78 percent and Environment B.2, "Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" at 70 percent). Observations and stakeholder interviews revealed that instructional strategies seldom embraced high expectations for all students. Only in about one-third of classrooms was it evident/very evident that students were (B.3) "provided exemplars of high quality work," were (B.4) "engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions and/or tasks" (48 percent), or were (B.5) "asked and responded to questions that require higher order thinking" (48 percent). Additionally, comments by students and parents indicated a need to provide more academically challenging work that elicits students' critical thinking skills. Given that in a little less than half of the classrooms (49 percent) teachers seldom asked or gave students opportunities to respond to higher order thinking questions, members of the school's leadership team are encouraged to closely examine all the items found within the High Expectations Learning Environment as leverage points to positively impact student learning.

Supportive Learning Environment

The Supportive Learning Environment was one of the highest rated among all of the environments with an

overall average score of 3.02 (AEN 3.05). In 90 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students demonstrated or expressed that their learning experiences were positive (C.1). Similarly, in approximately 92 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students demonstrated a positive attitude about the classroom and learning (C.2). In more than three-fourths of classrooms, instances of students being provided support and assistance to understand content were evident/very evident (C.4). In slightly less than half (49 percent) of the classrooms was it evident that students were provided alternative instruction and feedback. This item is linked to A.1 above where differentiated learning opportunities were occurring in less than half of the classrooms.

Active Learning Environment

The average rating for the Active Learning Environment was 2.95 (AEN 2.93). Observers reported that it was evident/very evident that students were, "...actively engaged in learning activities..." (D.3) in 82 percent of classrooms. In 78 percent of the classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students received opportunities to engage in discussions with the teacher and other students (D.1). Additionally, observers noted that lesson content connections with real-life experiences (D.2) were evident/very evident in 47 percent of the classroom visits. Providing authentic, real-life learning experiences for students could positively affect student learning.

Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment

Progress Monitoring earned an overall averaged of 2.50 (AEN 2.76). In 65 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students respond to teacher feedback to improve understanding (E2). Instances of students demonstrating or verbalizing understanding of the lesson/content (E.3) and having opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback (E.5) were evident/very evident in 57 and 53 percent (respectively) of the classrooms. In 41 percent of the classrooms, it was evident/very evident that instructional practices included asking and/or quizzing students about individual progress/learning (E.1) and student understanding of how work teachers assessed student work (40 percent) (E.4).

During interviews, leadership and staff noted the use of data in administrative decision-making. At the school-level, use of data is beginning to have more of an impact on instruction or instructional modifications. Identifying an effective, system-wide use of assessment data would strengthen and inform instructional practices and student learning. School leadership should consider the positive impact that the implementation of on-going, authentic, and valid data in daily lessons/planning could have on student learning.

Well-Managed Learning Environment

With an overall average score of 3.17 on a 4-point scale, the Well-Managed Learning Environment rated highest among all of the Environments (AEN 3.12). In nearly all (94 percent) classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students speak and interact respectfully with teachers and peers (F.1). Similarly, it was evident/very evident in 88 percent of classrooms that students follow classroom rules and work well with others as well as in 84 percent of classrooms students know routines and behavioral expectation and consequences (F.2 and F.5 respectively).

Digital Learning Environment

Student use of technology to gather information, evaluate, conduct research, problem solve, create original

works, or communicate and work collaboratively for learning was essentially absent. The average for this Environment was 1.44 (AEN 1.86). While observers noted that teachers used computers and projectors during instruction, they also noted an absence of technology for student use in many classroom. Given the scarcity of opportunities for students to participate actively in effective uses of technology, engaging learners with the use of technology to create projects and real-world solutions for problem solving could positively affect student motivation and learning.

Perhaps the most compelling data that are considered during an External Review are data gathered during classroom observations. Focusing on student behaviors, the eleot™ provides the External Review Team insight into the daily experiences of the system's students. Most of the Indicators are informed by what happens in the classroom. Therefore, it was important that the Team observe in a wide variety of grades and content areas. The 49 observations completed allowed the Team to meet that goal.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.33	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	18.37%	22.45%	32.65%	26.53%
2.	3.18	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	38.78%	44.90%	12.24%	4.08%
3.	3.20	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	34.69%	55.10%	6.12%	4.08%
4.	1.20	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	2.04%	0.00%	14.29%	83.67%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.48						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.98	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	20.41%	57.14%	22.45%	0.00%
2.	2.92	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	22.45%	46.94%	30.61%	0.00%
3.	2.02	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	6.12%	26.53%	30.61%	36.73%
4.	2.51	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	10.20%	38.78%	42.86%	8.16%
5.	2.53	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	22.45%	26.53%	32.65%	18.37%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.59						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.20	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	30.61%	59.18%	10.20%	0.00%
2.	3.33	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	40.82%	51.02%	8.16%	0.00%
3.	3.08	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	30.61%	48.98%	18.37%	2.04%
4.	3.04	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	28.57%	46.94%	24.49%	0.00%
5.	2.43	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	8.16%	40.82%	36.73%	14.29%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.02						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.18	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	42.86%	34.69%	20.41%	2.04%
2.	2.41	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	20.41%	26.53%	26.53%	26.53%
3.	3.27	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	44.90%	36.73%	18.37%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.95						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.24	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	10.20%	30.61%	32.65%	26.53%
2.	2.73	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	16.33%	48.98%	26.53%	8.16%
3.	2.69	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	22.45%	34.69%	32.65%	10.20%
4.	2.24	Understands how her/his work is assessed	6.12%	34.69%	36.73%	22.45%
5.	2.57	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	18.37%	34.69%	32.65%	14.29%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.50						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.59	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	65.31%	28.57%	6.12%	0.00%
2.	3.39	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	51.02%	36.73%	12.24%	0.00%
3.	2.86	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	28.57%	42.86%	14.29%	14.29%
4.	2.69	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	28.57%	28.57%	26.53%	16.33%
5.	3.31	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	46.94%	36.73%	16.33%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.17						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	1.51	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	10.20%	10.20%	0.00%	79.59%
2.	1.41	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	10.20%	4.08%	2.04%	83.67%
3.	1.39	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	10.20%	4.08%	0.00%	85.71%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.44						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop, implement, and monitor a process by which teachers use a system-wide instructional protocol in support of student learning.

(Indicator 3.6)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.6

Evidence and Rationale

A systemic and systematic instructional process undergirds a strong and effective educational system. While many of the system's educators talked about an instructional process, a common, intentional and planned instructional process was lacking. Schools and classrooms were too often provided too much latitude in determining their instructional process therefore leading to a lack of continuity.

Surveys

Feedback from the elementary, middle, and high school self-assessment surveys provided fair agreement between parents (78 percent), staff (87 percent) and students (83 percent) regarding the use of multiple assessments to measure student understanding. Yet, one in five staff members were ambivalent or disagreed/strongly disagreed that teachers provide students with specific and timely feedback about their learning. Additionally, more than 25 percent of middle and high school students and 32 percent of elementary students were unsure or disagreed/strongly disagreed that teachers keep the student's family informed of his/her academic progress.

Classroom Observations

Data compiled from the eleot™ indicated minimal use of exemplars to guide and inform students throughout the learning process with an absence of exemplars in approximately 67 percent of visited classrooms. Additionally, in barely 40 percent of classrooms was it evident/very evident that students knew how their work was assessed or students were asked about their individual progress. The lack of a systematic and system-wide instructional protocol is reflected in the eleot scores in which many students do not seem to be sure of the role of assessment in their learning process.

Documents and Artifacts

A review of the District Accreditation Report indicated that the district personnel recognized the need for teachers to implement the system's instructional process as a strategy to further strengthen and support student learning by ranking this Indicator a "2", one of only two indicators ranked at this level by the District. Interviews with school and district leadership reflected several protocols that are in use, but none were system wide, giving rise to minimizing professional conversations across grades and content areas.

Improvement Priority

Provide all students with an individualized, challenging curriculum and learning experiences to develop critical, higher order thinking skills that align to the intent and rigor of the Georgia Standards for Excellence.

(Indicator 3.1)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.1

Evidence and Rationale

Chickamauga City School System embraced the Georgia Standards for Excellence as the foundation for its curriculum to ensure that students excel in successfully completing rigorous and challenging learning opportunities. This goal is largely unrealized as most instruction is not individualized and most often has students completing activities at the lowest levels of knowledge.

Student Performance

Data from the state's accountability measure College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) indicates that achievement gap and student progress are areas of opportunity to gain additional points. The percent of students attaining proficient/distinguished status on 2016 Georgia Milestones was 51 percent for elementary and 51 percent for middle. The percent of students attaining proficient/distinguished status on 2015 Georgia Milestones was 54 percent for elementary and 54 percent for middle.

Trend data from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement Report Card indicates the district's overall Report Grade is B. The district has had this grade for the past 3 years. All three schools in the district share this trend, except for the middle school which has Grade C for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Classroom Observations

The eleot largely reflects low-level, group directed instructional strategies. For example, in 40 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students have differentiated learning opportunities and activities to

meet his/her needs. Forty-eight percent of classroom observations indicated that students were asked to respond to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g. applying, evaluating, applying and synthesizing). The lack of rigor is further evidenced as 48 percent of classroom observations reflected students engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions or tasks. Lastly, 48 percent of classroom observations indicate that students are provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs.

Stakeholder Surveys

Feedback from the student survey revealed that 39 percent of students were ambivalent or disagreed/strongly disagreed (All my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs) in regards to differentiated instruction. Additionally, 31 percent of the students were either ambivalent or disagreed/strongly disagreed (My school prepares me to deal with issues I may face in the future). Parent surveys revealed that 70 percent of parents indicated that their child's teacher meets his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction and 21 percent of students were either ambivalent or disagreed/strongly disagreed that the school provides them with challenging curriculum and learning experiences.

Stakeholder Interviews

In the interview with the superintendent, she acknowledged that differentiated instruction and rigor and depth of knowledge were identified areas of improvement to increase student achievement/content mastery, particularly for distinguished learners. The district's curriculum director and principals equally shared that the district's Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) focus is on Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) Standard 8: Academically Challenging Environment, higher-order thinking, questioning and depth of knowledge. While the district leadership has identified the aforementioned as areas of improvement, these practices have not become operationalized into classroom instructional planning and delivery. This is further validated as student interviews affirmed that their classroom work was "too easy" and they wanted work that challenged them or "makes them smarter."

Leadership Capacity

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress towards its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its institutional 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 enact strategies to improve results of student learning.

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

AdvancED has found through its evaluation of best practices in more than 32,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning that are aligned with the institutions' vision and supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

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

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

Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	3.20	2.68
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	3.00	2.68
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	2.80	2.90
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	2.80	2.65

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	3.40	2.97
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.40	2.96
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	3.20	3.17
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	3.60	3.03
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	3.40	2.74

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	3.00	2.70

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys (student, parent, and teacher) are directly correlated to the AdvancED Standards and indicators. They provide not only direct information about stakeholder satisfaction but also become a source of data for triangulation by the External Review Team as it evaluates indicators.

Institutions are asked to collect and analyze stakeholder feedback data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the administration of the surveys by institution, survey results, and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.42
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	4.00	3.03

Findings

Powerful Practice

The collective leadership, teaching, and support staff are stalwart in their sense of pride with the long tradition of excellence seeking a balance between maintaining their unique identity while preparing students for the 21st century.

(Indicator 2.5, SF1. Questionnaire Administration)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.5

Evidence and Rationale

As a united body of five citizens the school board is impacted by the collective desires of its members to focus on students. The board provides opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions and be involved in meaningful ways to help set the direction for the school system. Stakeholders' interviews and surveys as well as numerous artifacts reflect a board of education determined to do the right things.

Surveys

Survey results reflect that 84 percent of parents and 93 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed that stakeholders had opportunities for families to be involved in the school. Middle school and high school students were not as convinced about opportunities for their families to be involved with 69 percent agreeing/strongly agreeing. Concerning keeping families up-to-date on their child's progress, 75 percent of parents, 80 percent of staff and 75 percent of middle and high school students agreed/strongly agreed that families were regularly informed about student progress.

Interviews

One cannot spend a few hours in the Chickamauga School System without learning to appreciate the sense of pride based on more than a century of excellence. The system's motto "Working together to ensure a tradition of excellence continues...." serves as a foundation upon which daily, annual, and long-range plans are built. Perhaps no fact is more reflective of the strength of this motto than the referendum concerning the new high school. With an affirming vote of three to one, the citizens whole-heartedly embraced a step toward the future while insisting that the external appearance of the new school closely resemble the current structure.

Documents and Artifacts

Documentation provided regarding building the new high school reflects a variety of community work sessions where school leaders affirmed the intention of the meeting by asking and answering the question, "Why are we here?" "We want your input." In a community that holds fast to its traditions, the thought of tearing down the original high school was nearly unthinkable to many. Parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents had walked those halls, learned life lessons, and graduated into successful careers. Conversations, meetings, and information sharing/listening sessions continued over an 18-month period. In the end, many citizens who originally shuddered at the thoughts of demolishing a treasured building were on the front lines helping ensure that "...a tradition of excellence continues."

Powerful Practice

The district's board of education clearly understands its role as a policy making entity and works as a unified body, respecting the autonomy of the superintendent and her leadership team to effectively administer the schools and district

(Indicator 2.2)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.2

Evidence and Rationale

The impact that a board of education has on what happens in the classroom is enhanced when board members and the superintendent work cohesively and both hold fast to their role and function. Further, ongoing professional development for board members is key to ensuring up-to-date knowledge of research-based educational policies and practices. A number of pieces of evidence were reflective of a board of education determined to do the right thing.

Interviews

During interviews with board members, district leaders, school leadership and parents, it was reiterated in multiple ways and in many ways that the board of education was focused on the needs of students and understood its role as a policy-making body. With nearly 100 years of collective experience, the care and concern of the board was evident.

Surveys

In reacting to the statement, "Our schools' governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively," 85 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed. Staff was even more supportive of the board with 94 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that "Our schools' governing body or school board complies with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations."

Documents and Artifacts

The System's Accreditation Report notes several related accomplishments that reflect this Board's qualities. Two that are especially noteworthy include: (1) Board members annually conduct peer evaluations of themselves in regard of their performance, and (2) The Board exceeds the annual requirements for professional development. Additionally, the exemplary designation received by the Georgia School Boards Association is further evidence of the quality of this school board.

Resource Utilization

The use and distribution of resources must be aligned and supportive of the needs of an institution and the students served. Institutions must ensure that resources are aligned with the stated mission and are distributed equitably so that the needs of students are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes an examination of the allocation and use of resources, the equity of resource distribution to need, the ability of the institution to ensure appropriate levels of funding and sustainability of resources, as well as evidence of long-range capital and resource planning effectiveness.

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

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in the more than 32,000 institutions in the AdvancED Network that a successful institution 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 institution employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff members to improve their effectiveness and ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	3.00	2.87
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	3.00	2.87
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.60	3.06
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	3.00	2.76

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Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	2.80	2.73
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.40	2.72
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.60	2.58
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	2.60	2.60

Conclusion

The district is one of the poorest in the state, ranking 172 out 180. Yet, overall student achievement as measured by state-mandated assessments continues to be relatively high with the district's overall score of "B" for the past few years.

Given the district's relative success and its rich tradition, leadership must be vigilant to guard against the "good enough" syndrome. While construction of a new high school seems to reject "good enough," a satisfied community and stable leadership must not be content with status quo. There must be an unfaltering and unending quest for better teaching, more sophisticated technology and more efficient use of available resources. Group teaching must give way to individualized learning opportunities. Technology must become an essential tool available to all students to use for problem solving, research and collaboration. Leadership's look to the future must be as strong as its appreciation of the past.

An attribute that seems to permeate every school was reflected in the genuine and obvious manner in which the teachers, staff, and administrators cared for the students. Parents and board members were quick to point out this caring attitude when asked what made Chickamauga City Schools a special place.

Immediately in front of the current Gordon Lee High School one notices a concrete foundation and metal framing that is beginning to look similar but different than what it will soon hide. Respecting stakeholders with strong ties to the past, the exterior of the new Gordon Lee High School will be an improved model of itself. Elegant columns will welcome alumni, current, and future students to a facility that clearly embraces the challenge "to keep the future worthy of the past." The infrastructure will accommodate 21st Century instructional practices. Nevertheless, although improved facilities will be a source of pride, without attention to individualizing instruction and providing students with more rigorous learning opportunities, the new school will simply become a fancy shell encompassing old practices. Fortunately district leadership has already recognized the need to improve pedagogical practices with the implementation of data teams and expanded professional learning opportunities for teachers and administrators. The Improvement Priorities described elsewhere in this report align nicely with these initiatives.

The first Improvement Priority, focusing on providing all students with challenging, individualized learning experience, when fully implemented will provide a more rigorous experience for students and should result in improved student learning as measured by state-mandated assessments. Further, individualizing the experience will require on-going, job-embedded professional learning experiences for teachers. Fortunately, Chickamauga City Schools already has several teachers who provide individualized and rigorous experiences for students. School and district leadership are strongly encouraged to identify these talented teachers and engage them in providing coaching, modeling, and support for their teaching peers who may not be as skilled in these areas. The on-going and job-embedded nature of this training is critical to bring about sustained improvement.

The second Improvement Priority involving the use of a system-wide instructional protocol will facilitate conversations between teachers, vertically, horizontally, and across content areas. Creating opportunities for

cross-content conversions is especially important for those teachers who are stand-alone departments. As an example, while the high school may only have one biology teacher, there should be opportunities for the biology, math and literacy teachers, etc., to plan interdisciplinary learning opportunities following the same protocol.

The External Review Team left the Chickamauga City Schools encourage by the quality of its leadership including the school board, the superintendent, and central office and school-based leadership. The trust the community has placed in school personnel is something that Chickamauga City Schools' personnel should closely guard. Finally, the 1,301 fine boys and girls and young men and women who comprise the student body provide hope and encouragement that today's teachers and leaders will sustain a school system within the Chickamauga City Schools that is second to none.

Improvement Priorities

The institution should use the findings from this review to guide the continuous improvement process. The institution must address the Improvement Priorities listed below:

- Develop, implement, and monitor a process by which teachers use a system-wide instructional protocol in support of student learning.
- Provide all students with an individualized, challenging curriculum and learning experiences to develop critical, higher order thinking skills that align to the intent and rigor of the Georgia Standards for Excellence.

Accreditation Recommendation

Index of Education Quality

The Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) provides a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of indicators and evaluative criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus.

The IEQ™ comprises three domains: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; and 3) the use of resources and data to support and optimize learning.

The overall and domain scores can range from 100-400. The domain scores are derived from: the AdvancED Standards and indicators ratings; results of the Analysis of Student Performance; and data from Stakeholder Feedback Surveys (students, parents, and staff).

	External Review IEQ Score	AdvancED Network Average
Overall Score	304.88	278.94
Teaching and Learning Impact	296.19	268.48
Leadership Capacity	331.67	293.71
Resource Utilization	287.50	286.27

The IEQ™ results include information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria as well as to other institutions in the AdvancED Network. The institution should use the information in this report, including the corresponding performance rubrics, to identify specific areas of improvement.

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

Addenda

Other System Institutions

The following institutions did not utilize ASSIST to complete the Accreditation Report for this External Review. Therefore self-reported results are not included as part of this report. Some institutions appearing below may have been required to submit the Accreditation Report outside of ASSIST.

Institution	Institution
Chickamauga Elementary School	Gordon Lee Middle School
Gordon Lee High School	

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Dr. David Barnett	After serving 42 years in education, Dr. David Barnett retired in July 2016 from his position as Founding Dean for the Patton College of Education at the University of Pikeville in Pikeville, KY. Prior to accepting the Dean's position, Barnett worked thirteen years as a faculty member at Morehead State University (MSU) in Morehead, KY. His responsibilities at MSU also included department chair, assistant dean, and director of the doctoral program. Prior to moving to higher education, Barnett served in the public schools for twenty-seven years. His P-12 experience spans several roles including middle school math teacher, P-12 instructional supervisor, federal programs coordinator, finance officer, assistant superintendent, and school district superintendent. He holds several teaching and administrative certificates. He completed his doctorate in educational leadership at the University of Kentucky in 1986. Barnett also serves as a founding board member for The Way, a Christian organization that financially supports an elementary school in Phnom Penh for children who live on or near the city dump. The Way also supports an orphanage located on the Meng Kong River about two hours north of Phnom Penh.
Dr. David Mims	Currently serving as the Superintendent of Schools in Crisp County, Georgia. Twenty-eight years as an educator serving in the capacities of Superintendent, Asst. Superintendent, Middle and High School Principal, Athletic Director, teacher, and coach.
Dr. Lisa E. Stone	Lisa Stone is currently the Associate Director for the AdvancED Kentucky Operations Office. Lisa has served as an elementary and middle school teacher, elementary principal, Director of Student Achievement and Elementary School Director for Fayette County Public Schools in Lexington, Kentucky, Education Leader for the Kentucky Association of School Councils, and Director of School Improvement for Montgomery County Schools in Kentucky.
Mrs. Cynthia Paul Jones	<p>Cynthia Paul Jones is the Assistant Principal of Instruction at Southfield Elementary School in Macon, Georgia. In her capacity as an instructional leader, Mrs. Jones is responsible for implementing and monitoring the school's Continuous Improvement Plan.</p> <p>She began her career in education as an Educational Program Specialist in the School of Social Work at the University of Georgia. After several years of service, Mrs. Jones transitioned to the public school system where she taught middle grades science and mathematics. During her career as a middle school teacher, she focused on student achievement through the process of school improvement. As a result of her outstanding leadership and proficiency in mathematics instruction, Mrs. Jones served as an instructional coach in mathematics at the high school level.</p> <p>She has several degrees in education including a Bachelor of Arts, Masters in Secondary Mathematics Education, and an Educational Specialist in Educational Leadership. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership.</p> <p>Mrs. Jones is married with three children. She's very active in her community, church and several civic organizations. As a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, she serves on an outreach committee designed to prepare high school students for post-secondary education.</p>

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Mary F Minich	<p>Mary Minich is the Accountability Analyst in the Department of Evaluation and Accountability with the Lake County, Florida, Schools. Her responsibilities include reconciling state and local data utilized in determining school grades, graduation rates, dropout rates, and student enrollment and performance. Her experiences include serving as a member of County-wide and School-level Advisory Committees, the District Professional Development Council, and District School Improvement Plan review committees. Prior school district positions include high school test coordinator, Student Services Program Specialist, ESOL trainer-of-teachers, and elementary and middle school teacher. She received an AA degree in Restaurant, Hotel, and Institutional Management from Purdue University, a BA degree in Elementary Education from Stetson University, and her MA in Educational Leadership from National-Louis University.</p>
Dr. Chara N. Moore	<p>Dr. Chara Moore is currently the Proud Principal of Sims Elementary School in Rockdale County Public Schools. Dr. Moore loves literacy, school improvement and building leaders of all facets (scholars and teachers). Dr. Moore has served as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, coach, Assistant Principal and K-12 district ELA Coordinator. In her spare time, you can find Dr. Moore on the pavement training for her next marathon or in the kitchen trying out a new recipe!</p> <p>Follow Sims on Twitter https://twitter.com/sims_ivyleague</p> <p>Follow Dr. Moore on Twitter https://twitter.com/@CharaMoore_EdD</p>

Next Steps

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the Powerful Practices section to maximize their impact on the institution.
3. Consider the Opportunities for Improvement identified throughout the report that are provided by the team in the spirit of continuous improvement and the institution's commitment to improving its capacity to improve student learning.
4. Develop action plans to address the Improvement Priorities identified by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Improvement Priorities.
5. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
6. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Improvement Priorities. Institutions are required to respond to all Improvement Priorities. The report will be reviewed at the appropriate state, national, and/or international levels to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to address the Improvement Priorities. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the responses to the Improvement Priorities and the resulting improvement.
7. Continue to meet the AdvancED Standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

About AdvancED

AdvancED is the world leader in providing improvement and accreditation services to education providers of all types in their pursuit of excellence in serving students. AdvancED serves as a trusted partner to more than 32,000 public and private schools and school systems – enrolling more than 20 million students - across the United States and 70 countries.

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) that was founded in 1917 became part of AdvancED.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. The Accreditation Divisions of AdvancED share research-based quality standards that cross school system, state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified and consistent process designed to engage educational institutions in continuous improvement.

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