



Recognizing Excellence in Education in Spartanburg School District Four

Cognia recognizes 59 schools and 20 systems across the globe with award for excellence in education.

Spartanburg School District Four was recently recognized by Cognia as a **School of Distinction for 2021**. Cognia is a global, non-profit, accrediting organization. It offers accreditation within a framework of continuous improvement. Cognia serves 36,000 public and private institutions from early learning through high school in more than 85 countries. During the 2020–21 school year, Cognia conducted more than 1,200 school engagement reviews for accreditation. Based upon those reviews, 59 schools and 20 systems have been recognized for this award. Spartanburg District Four was recognized as a school system, as the district and all its schools participated in the review process and hold Cognia accreditation.

“Congratulations to the schools and systems for demonstrating excellence in education in meeting the Cognia Performance Standards based on the results of their 2020–2021 accreditation reviews,” said Cognia President and CEO Dr. Mark A. Elgart. “Having earned the **School of Distinction** recognition, each of these institutions provides evidence of growth in learning, maintains a healthy culture for learning, supports engaging and high-quality instructional environments, and demonstrates effective leadership for learning.”

Schools participated in a rigorous evaluation process that included a period of self-assessment, an evaluation conducted by trained external, third-party evaluators, and an improvement phase focused on the results of the evaluation. Cognia’s Performance Standards for accreditation are based on ever-expanding research and understanding of learning and define high-quality education for today and tomorrow’s world. Once an institution is accredited, it engages in a similar engagement review every five years to maintain accreditation.

Cognia utilizes the Index of Education Quality (IEQ) to measure the district’s adherence to the Cognia Performance Standards, which are divided into three domains: Leadership Capacity, Learning Capacity, and Resource Capacity. The IEQ ranges from 100 to 400 points. Over the last five years, the average IEQ in the Cognia Improvement Network ranged from 278.34 – 283.33 points. Spartanburg District Four significantly exceeded that range with an IEQ of 361.77 points. The district rated at the highest level or next to the highest level in the 31 standards across the three domains.

Of the schools and systems recognized as a **School of Distinction for 2021**, 61 were located within the United States representing the following states: Alaska, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Eighteen were located internationally in Belgium, Bolivia, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Lebanon, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Dr. Rallie Liston, Superintendent, said, “We believe District Four is an excellent school district. Our students, teachers, support staff, and administrators work hard every day. However, it is very important to have our policies, procedures, and practices measured according to international protocols by an external committee. To achieve these unbiased results from an outside team confirms our purpose and supports our ongoing improvement efforts.”

Mr. Tony Davis, Chairman of the District Four Board of Trustees, stated, “To hold accreditation through Cognia is an outstanding accomplishment and demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement. To be recognized as a **School of Distinction for 2021**, a school system that stands out in its service to learners, is incredible. I am very proud of District Four and would like to thank our teachers, staff, and administrators for their high standards. This recognition is a direct result of their efforts.”