

**Report of the  
Quality Assurance Review Team  
for  
Jefferson City Schools  
345 Storey Lane  
Jefferson, Georgia, United States 30549-1018**

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*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), and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.*

**Quality Assurance Review Report**

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## About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

**Background.** Founded in 1895, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and Schools (SACS CASI) accredit public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, Latin America, and the Department of Defense Schools worldwide.

In 2006, NCA CASI, SACS CASI, and the research and development arm of the accrediting associations, the National Study of School Evaluation, unified to form AdvancED. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 23,000 schools in 65 countries, serving 15 million students.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI and SACS CASI have defined shared, research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help schools, school districts, and educational service agencies continuously improve.

**The Accreditation Process.** To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, school districts and their schools must:

**1) Meet the AdvancED Standards and Policies for Quality School Systems.** School districts demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards and policies which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

**2) Engage in continuous improvement.** School districts and their schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose that the school district is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school and district effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).

**3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** School districts and schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, school districts host an external quality assurance review team once every five years. The team evaluates the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the school district improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school district and a written report detailing the team's required actions. The school district acts on the team's required actions and submits a progress report two years following the review.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI accreditation engages the entire school district community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help school districts and their schools maximize student success and improve organizational effectiveness

# Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

**Purpose.** The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

1. Evaluate the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards and policies.
2. Assess the efficacy of the district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions to improve the district and its schools.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation for review by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

A key aim of the Quality Assurance Review is to verify that the school district is operating with institutional integrity - that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students.

**School District Preparation.** To prepare for the Quality Assurance Review, the school district and the community complete the AdvancED Standards Assessment Report. The report engages the district in an in-depth self assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. The school district identifies and describes the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each standard. Through this internal review, the school district examines how its systems and processes contribute to student performance and school district effectiveness.

**Summary of Team Activities.** The Quality Assurance Review Team is led by an AdvancED certified District Lead Evaluator and comprised of professionals from outside the school district. The team reviews the findings of the school district's internal self-assessment, conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders, reviews student performance data and other documentation provided by the school district, and observes practices and daily operations. The team engages in professional deliberations to reach consensus on the school district's adherence to the standards for accreditation. The team provides an oral exit report and prepares a written Quality Assurance Review Team Report designed to help the school district and its schools improve.

**The Quality Assurance Review Team Report.** Following the visit, the review team completes the Quality Assurance Review report. After review by a nationally-trained reader, the report is submitted to the district. The report contains commendations and required actions for improvement.

**Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions.** The school district uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school district is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The AdvancED State Office is available to assist the school district in addressing the required actions. Following the Quality Assurance Review Team visit, the school district must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress it has made on the team's required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school district is addressing the required actions.

**Accreditation Recommendation.** The Quality Assurance Review team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school district following action from the commission.

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## Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the SACS CASI Georgia State Office (SACS-CASI-GA), a division of AdvancED, visited Jefferson City Schools on 03/04/2012 - 03/07/2012.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 17 administrators, 67 teachers, 14 support staff, 56 parents and business partners, 48 students, and 6 Board of Education members for a total of 416 stakeholders. In addition to meeting with district personnel and stakeholders, the team visited 4 schools within the school district. During the school visits, team members interviewed school stakeholders, observed classrooms, and reviewed relevant school artifacts. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the district. Specifically, the team examined the district's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED standards focus on systems with a school district and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of the standards lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards. The Quality Assurance Review Team used the AdvancED standards to guide its review of the school district, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school district and its schools function as a whole and embody the practices and characteristics of a quality school district.

Through its examination of the school district's adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review Team prepared reports on each standard, highlighting strengths and suggestions for improvement specific to each standard. These reports can be found following this summary.

The Quality Assurance Review Team also examined the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance. The team reviewed the district's practices and methods to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results. The team's findings in this area can be found following the standard reports.

The team used the standard reports and quality assurance findings to identify common themes, significant accomplishments, and pressing needs facing the district. These became the basis for the overall commendations and required actions that are provided below. The commendations and required actions should serve as the focus for the district as it acts on the team's findings. They represent the areas that the team believes will have the greatest impact in helping the district further its improvement efforts. The standard reports and quality assurance findings can be used to help reinforce and enrich the district's understanding of the commendations and required actions.

## Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the Jefferson City Schools for the following strengths and accomplishments. While additional strengths are noted in the detailed review of each standard that appears later in this report, the commendations listed below are the strengths that the team believes are most deserving of being highlighted.

### Commendation 1

Commendation Statement:

Jefferson City School System (JCSS) has established a culture of excellence and commitment to high expectations yielding student achievement that exceeds standards.

Evidence:

The QAR team found substantial evidence in student achievement results that JCSS is and has been one of the highest-achieving systems in the state of Georgia. Artifacts and school visits showed a climate conducive to innovation. Expectations for staff and students are very high, yet supports and scaffolds exist to promote achievement and accomplishment. Many innovative programs exist -- the Total Person Program at Jefferson High School, the Museum Project at Jefferson Academy, athletic, artistic, and academic acceleration programs, and the various on-site and off-site programs and experiences designed to promote the multiple intelligences of students. These show that JCSS's enviable record of achievement on state and national assessments has not resulted in complacency.

Rationale:

The widespread commitment to exceed, not merely meet, standards, puts JCSS in a position to become a national leader in education.

### Commendation 2

Commendation Statement:

JCSS has cultivated shared leadership and involvement among stakeholders.

Evidence:

As a small school system with a very small central office staff, the superintendent and board of education have empowered system employees, families, and community members to exercise leadership to promote problem-solving and innovation. In the course of interviews and examination of artifacts the QAR team found numerous significant examples of programs and services initiated by stakeholders, e.g., school- and community-initiated programs, various student exchanges and off-site field experiences, mentoring programs, and the like. During interviews, team members were particularly impressed by the leadership and empowerment expressed by teachers and students. Stakeholders at all levels expressed respect for the professionalism and dedication of the teaching staff.

Rationale:

Distributed leadership promotes innovation and loyalty to the system, maximizing efficiency and minimizing turnover.

### Commendation 3

**Commendation Statement:**

Exemplary stewardship of resources provides quality programs that promote student achievement and success.

**Evidence:**

Interviews with board members and presentations by system staff showed that JCSS has managed to operate on a shoestring. Data show that it has one of the lowest per pupil expenditures in the state. Nonetheless, the system provides an admirable array of programs and services to students -- numerous opportunities for advanced study (including an increasing roster of Advanced Placement courses), a full array of fine arts courses and activities, numerous athletic offerings, etc. Facilities are by and large well-designed and maintained.

**Rationale:**

JCSS has earned the admiration and trust of its stakeholders for its creative and frugal use of resources.

## Required Actions

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following required actions for improvement. The team focused its required actions on those areas that, if addressed, will have the greatest impact on improving student performance and overall effectiveness of the school district. The Jefferson City Schools will be held accountable for making progress on each of the required actions noted in this section.

Following this review, the school district will be asked to submit a progress report on these required actions. The district should refer to the detail provided in the standard reports for guidance and greater depth on the required actions.

### Required Action 1

**Required Action:**

Integrate systemic and systematic processes for the alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment, interventions, and school improvement planning, Pre-K-12.

**Evidence:**

The QAR team found substantial evidence of exemplary practice in the areas noted. JCSS delivers high quality instruction consistently at some schools. The system has embarked on a systematic process of examining the Common Core curriculum standards and has institutionalized processes for data analysis and development of interventions at the elementary level. The system provided some examples of meaningful and effective school improvement planning processes. These practices are not as yet systemic, however, with noticeable gaps at the secondary level. The system has initiated processes to improve alignment and consistency across the system, notably through its use of Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards (a school wide audit process), use of the Learning-Focused Instruction model, and implementation of cross-grade classroom walkthroughs by teachers and administrators.

**Rationale:**

Full, ongoing implementation of methods to improve alignment -- largely based on systematically maximizing the high quality practices already in place in parts of JCSS -- will move the entire system forward.

### Required Action 2

**Required Action:**

Solicit meaningful involvement of all stakeholders to address budgetary and instructional challenges for 21st century learning.

**Evidence:**

JCSS has been unusually creative and resourceful in making the most of limited resources. Evidence shared with the QAR team showed that reductions in state funding over the last decade have been significant, but the system has compensated for them through strategic cuts in services (including furloughs) and by raising funds through both public and private sources. The system has managed to increase its record of achievement despite these fiscal challenges. In looking toward the future, the system will need to engage its community in discussion of full access to the learning possibilities available in the 21st century, which requires significant investment in infrastructure, professional learning by the instructional staff, and instructional materials and equipment. In addition the system has relied on informal methods of soliciting input from its stakeholders, possible for a small school system, but less feasible as the system's population and diversity grows, and as it seeks to reach its full potential as a national model in education. Full inclusion of stakeholders in the process is in order.

**Rationale:**

Developing formalized processes for gaining stakeholder perspectives will increase reciprocal communication between the system and the larger community, and will promote discussions of constructive and consensus-based solutions to ongoing fiscal challenges.

**Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools:** The team reviewed the district's adherence to each of the AdvancED standards. The findings from this review are provided in the next section of this report.

## Next Steps

The school district should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the commendations section to maximize their impact on the school district.
3. Develop action plans to address the required actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the required actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school district's efforts to improve student performance and district effectiveness.
5. Two years following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. Lack of progress can result in a change in accreditation status.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

### Celebrating Accreditation

Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review Team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for review and action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and communicates it to the school district. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school district should celebrate its achievement with the community. Flags, door decals, diploma seals, and other related items



can be ordered from the website to help you share your accomplishment with your community.

**Summary**

The accreditation process engages the school district, its schools, and community in an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. The next steps in this journey are to build on the commendations and address the required actions noted in this report. Doing so will enable the school district to advance in its quest for excellence and deepen the fulfillment of its mission for all students.

# Standards for Accreditation

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the district demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

The Quality Assurance Review Team divided into standard teams to review each standard and prepare a standards report summarizing the team's findings. These standard reports, along with the quality assurance findings that follow these reports, provided the basis for the team's identification of over-arching commendations and required actions presented earlier in this report. The reports submitted by each team are provided on the following pages for the district's review and use. Each report reflects its respective team's unique voice, perspective, and deliberations. The reports can be used to help enrich and deepen the district's understanding of the overall commendations and required actions.

## Standard 1: Vision & Purpose

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

### Description:

Jefferson City School System (JCSS) has developed a comprehensive statement of its vision and purpose, including a mission statement and statement of beliefs. Even though the mission statement has been in existence for many years, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Steering Committee and the board of education annually examine to make sure the system is graduating “Fully Functioning Adults.” Documents and interviews showed that at an administrative retreat roughly four years ago, system leaders spent considerable time “unpacking” the system’s vision and purpose statements to develop common understandings of their meaning and to ensure their currency.

The Standard Assessment Review (SAR), artifacts, and personal interviews indicated that there was a strong mission “To Graduate Fully Functioning Adults” throughout the district. This has been communicated to internal and external stakeholders, newsletters, website, handbooks, etc. The school system’s vision, purpose, and mission statements can be found on the system’s website; they are also posted in various sites throughout school buildings.

The vision appears to be enthusiastically embraced by the entire school system. It guides direction for the quality of work performed by students and staff and has received strong support from the community. The mission statement is at the foundation of the system strategic plan at each school’s plan of improvement. The mission “To Graduate Fully Functional Adults” is evident as the system strives for a successful partnership with all stakeholders and to assure quality education of every student. The JCSS Standards Assessment Report included an Executive Summary detailing demographic and programmatic trend data and information. The system has made beginning efforts to assess the efficacy of its programs by gathering information about and input from graduates, though these efforts are not yet systemic. It should be noted that student enrollment has increased by 93% since 2001.

Evidence indicates system wide goals advance the mission of the system. Mission statement is present in

all system and school improvement plans. System level goals are clearly defined with the vision and mission at the forefront. The system does not currently have a strategic plan as such, but as a relatively tightly-coupled organization with unusual longevity among its leadership and staff, shows clear evidence of the capacity to move forward both consistently yet flexibly under the guidance of its purpose documents. Goals are set forth in the system's Comprehensive LEA Implementation Plan.

The system has a strong commitment to exposing all students to excellence. This is evident in the system creating a "cherished" motto "Exposure to Excellence Promotes Excellence." Stakeholders communicated in interviews that the Jefferson City School System is providing students with excellent educational opportunities. One example is the Georgia Olympics where the system's motto was established.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The school district involved stakeholders in examining its mission statement.
- There has been a commitment to continue the mission statement over time.
- The system's vision and mission statements are located in publications, posted in the schools and district office.
- Teaching and learning are driven by the vision and mission for the district.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Monitor the vision and mission regularly to assure 21st century applicability.
- Review the mission statement of the system at each school to ensure that all components of the system are in alignment.
- Research efficient methods of tracking or polling JCSS graduates to determine the degree to which the system is graduating "Fully Functioning Adults."

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the Jefferson City Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Vision & Purpose" standard.

## Standard 2: Governance & Leadership

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

**Description:**

The Jefferson City School Board of Education has six elected members and a superintendent who is appointed by the board members. Individually and collectively, board members have many years of experience and expertise. Board members have assumed significant leadership roles in the state. The board has been named a School Board of Distinction by the Georgia School Board Association (GSBA). The current board chair has served as an officer of the GSBA. The board members understand fully that their function is to set policy and the superintendent's function is to execute policy. Internal and external stakeholders uniformly described working relationships among board members and between the board and JCSS administration as positive, productive, and constructive.

The school system is composed of four schools: Jefferson Elementary School (PreK-2nd), Jefferson

Academy (3rd-5th), Jefferson Middle School (6th-8th), and Jefferson High School (9th-12th). The system has experienced high growth in its enrollment in recent years, enrolling a considerable percentage of out-of-district students, many of whom pay tuition to attend. There is stability within the system since there is little turnover of faculty and staff at each school. Interviews with stakeholders show a widespread belief that the stability and expertise of leadership has helped the system maintain – and increase – its record of high student achievement, its broad and varied programs, and its success in serving an expanding and increasingly diverse student population.

The central office staff provided documentation of compliance with state and federal regulations. The JCSS policy manual is aligned with the Georgia School Boards Association recommended policies.

Board members and school leaders review budget information and student achievement data during their spring and summer retreats. A variety of formative and summative data are used to determine the effectiveness of system processes and are utilized for improvement planning and to adjust actions. Systematic and on-going planning is designed to meet the overall needs of the school system.

Each principal in the district has a functional leadership team. There is representation from the faculty and stakeholders which are involved in the process. Each leadership team reviews research-based programs and instructional strategies; the leadership team is charged with facilitating the development of the school improvement plan. Interviews with school personnel attested to the widespread cultivation of teacher leadership, important in the words of one principal because of the leanness of the central office staff: "We ask teachers to be leaders," in various ways, including service on active school committees.

The system has been proactive in meeting the needs of its students during a 93 percent growth over the past several years. Even though the system has experienced a decline in per-student revenue, system leaders had a plan of action to accommodate growth. One example is the use of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Taxes to renovate and build facilities.

The system has exceptional legal counsel from school board attorneys Harben, Hartley, and Hawkins. Employees are knowledgeable about due process procedures and how to access legal counsel. The system is financially stable. The system is mindful of the need to maintain a budget reserve; it has found it necessary to dip into reserve funds in order to balance the budget in recent years, given reductions in state funding because of austerity cuts.

Stakeholders at all levels express appreciation for the student management system, Infinite Campus. Students and parents said that they access grades on a regular bases. Stakeholders have an opportunity to serve on leadership teams such as School Councils. During these opportunities, stakeholders examine system data and provide suggestions on how to improve the system. The widely-attended annual Community Breakfast that precedes the start of each school year provides stakeholders with valuable information about the school system through review of student achievement results, explanation of new construction projects, and the showcasing of "Points of PRIDE."

Stakeholders affirmed the wide participation of parents and business Partners in Education in the work of the school system. The system Standards Assessment Report affirmed the value of the Jefferson Schools Foundation in providing resources to supplement the regular budget and to increase access to educational programs to large numbers of students. Currently, the system does not have a systematic process for gaining stakeholder input, although many ad hoc methods do exist, via federal programs surveys, community meetings, email access, and the like. The system has increased system level opportunities for parents and community members and the system has increased system level leadership's participation in community based organizations.

The system executes the Georgia processes for evaluating professional and classified staff. The QAR team found ample evidence that professional learning is part of the culture of Jefferson City School System, from the board level to classified staff.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- A strong working relationship exists between the Jefferson City Schools Board of Education and the superintendent, with well-defined roles and responsibilities.
- The system leadership's expertise in financial matters allows JCSS to maximize funding and resources.
- The leadership team, including board members, central office personnel, and school administrators participate in spring retreat to identify instructional needs and resources and utilize summer institute to analyze data and make an action plan to address strengths and weaknesses of the system.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Develop a comprehensive plan to clearly define stakeholder involvement to determine how these networks will be coordinated, input sought, and how it will be used to improve the work of the system.
- Follow through and develop even more strategies to increase equity of stakeholders.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the Jefferson City Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Governance & Leadership" standard.

## Standard 3: Teaching & Learning

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

**Description:**

Artifacts show that the JCSS implements a rigorous and relevant curriculum that is based on sound instructional strategies, assessments and processes facilitated by district curriculum pacing guides, course syllabi as well as school action plans. The Georgia Performance Standards are used in all grades and content areas, according to the JCSS Standards Assessment Report. The curriculum is reviewed at regular intervals by the curriculum committees at each school as well as during grade, school, departmental and district level meetings. JCSS supports student engagement and sets expectations through course syllabi, exemplary works and opportunities such as field trips and student exchange programs. School visits and classroom observations showed some exemplary engagement of students, though this was not consistent across all schools and classrooms.

Staff interviews show that there is a concentrated focus on data analysis and use. The cycle begins with the annual BOE data retreat, which drives system action and professional learning plans. It continues through the year with school based action plans, data digs and the disaggregation of test data at the grade, departmental and school levels. The JCSS follows the learning focused frameworks model to support research-based instruction and to ensure implementation of a standards-based curriculum. The QAR team noted this through descriptions of the walk-through observation process, records of grade and subject

meetings, and evidence of district led professional development activities.

The JCSS curriculum is aligned with the State of Georgia Performance Standards and is enhanced by multiple offerings in Advanced Placement courses and opportunities to excel in co- and extra-curricular activities. Planning is taking place to prepare for the implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards which includes, mapping, planning and timeline construction for full implementation. Students are offered opportunities to remediate as well as enrich their educational pursuits. Data shared with the QAR team showed dramatic increases in high school Advanced Placement offerings and participation in the last five year. Jefferson High School has been named an AP Challenge School, AP Merit School, and an AP Stem School. Interviews with stakeholders indicated uneven practices to promote an appreciation of diversity with some flagship initiatives but some curricular gaps.

The JCSS district calendar allows for instructional time that exceeds the state minimum requirements and district curriculum maps ensure that instructional time is maximized. Instructional time is monitored effectively through the use of standards based walk-through observations. JCSS enhances articulation with dialogue among schools and parents through the use of transition meetings, school visits and the use of the Dragon PRIDE transition program. The JCSS supports students who are in need of interventions through the use of resources, for example the FIRE program, Pyramid of Interventions and online assessments such as E2020, graduation test prep and USA Test Prep. The system's commitment to learning is also evident in its institution of a PreK program at Jefferson Elementary School, serving 88 students out of a total enrollment of 745. The efficacy of the JCSS special education program is evident in its earning an award from the Georgia Council for Administrators of Special Education for meeting and exceeding targets for students with disabilities.

The QAR team found that the JCSS sustains a system-wide support of learning through examination of artifacts such as the school and system safety and renovation plans, incentive programs, and various information nights. These were evident in hard copy as well as the interview process of the various stakeholder groups. The JCSS was found to provide ready access to technology and information through programs such parent portal, the State Longitudinal Data System, computer labs, websites and a system wide technology plan. All schools have fully-staffed media centers, though some stakeholders expressed concern about the size of some of the collections and about access to state-of-the-art instructional technology in all schools. Observations showed that media coordinators are full participants in instructional delivery. Multiple stakeholders affirmed that when budgetary decisions are made, classroom instruction was a priority.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- JCSS displays a solid commitment to student achievement through the implementation and alignment of standards, assessment and support that produces high student achievement as evidenced by their standardized test scores.
- The students of the JCSS are provided the opportunity to participate in many real world experiences both within the school walls and outside.
- The JCSS has established a system where each child is provided multiple opportunities to master standards and has compiled a network of specific interventions to ensure that students have opportunities to succeed and graduate from the JCSS.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Formulate a comprehensive system for the implementation of the Pyramid of Interventions that is consistent through-out the JCSS.
- Focus on the plan to upgrade and improve the technology system which will allow students and staff more opportunities to enhance and improve the educational experience of the students of the JCSS.

- Implement a formalized communication component for vertical alignment to enhance the understanding by teachers in the transition years (2-3, 5-6, 8-9) of the knowledge base of their incoming students.
- Formulate a comprehensive system for the implementation of the Pyramid of Interventions that is consistent through-out the JCSS.
- Identify and address curricular gaps in cultivating the appreciation of diversity.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Jefferson City Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Teaching & Learning" standard.

## Standard 4: Documenting & Using Results

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

### Description:

The JCSS comprehensive student assessment system includes all required state assessments as well as school-based diagnostic assessments, benchmark assessments, teacher-developed probes, and formative assessments. The assessment system is aligned with the expectation of continuous improvement throughout JCSS. Interviews with various stakeholders indicate that the results from these assessments are analyzed regularly to inform instruction and to identify students for support as well as extension. The analysis of statewide data is present at the district and the school levels while the analysis and use of school-based data sources, including but not limited to the Pyramid of Intervention (PoI) process, and the related professional learning is not yet systemic.

Review of artifacts and interviews showed frequent system-level use of comparative and trend data. Teachers develop target lists throughout the year using multiple data sources. This data informs monthly and quarterly system data meetings. The expectation is that subgroup information is included in the data used to guide instruction, however, this implementation does not appear to be systemic. Evidence shows the use of Northeast Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) and Georgia School Council Institute as sources for comparison data. In some cases this data has been used to initiate site visits, physical or virtual, to high performing schools in the region and state. This data use is not systemic and has not yet been extended to examples beyond the state of Georgia.

JCSS student assessment results are consistently among the highest in the state. All schools have made Adequate Yearly Progress for eight consecutive years. Leadership at both the system and school levels recognize and encourage continuous improvement in the area of data use through use of the PRIDE (Plan, Review, Implement, Determine effectiveness, Examine results) cycle. There is an overall sense of importance in using this data to push students beyond meeting expectations to exceeding expectations on state assessments. Evidence gathered through interviews and data room observation indicate that data from statewide assessments are reviewed in a timely manner by both system and school level employees. Review of system documentation (SAR, CLIP) indicates that data analysis informs the school improvement planning process. Interviews did not indicate a consistently strong connection between these processes for teachers at all levels.

The system has a variety of means of communicating student assessment results to stakeholders. System and school level leadership confirmed frequent communication between system leadership about student performance. JCSS uses the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and Infinite Campus for secure storage and communication of assessment data. Teacher interviews indicate use of both systems and multiple interview sources confirm the active use of Infinite Campus for communication about a variety of data for individuals. Parent conferences and other means of direct communication are the primary sources of communication for school-based diagnostic and formative assessment and resulting support or extension plans. The system uses the state Online Assessment System, which affords rapid turnaround of testing results.

Interviews with system support staff indicate that data are regularly analyzed for operational effectiveness and efficiency in the areas of transportation, nutrition, technology services and finance. Department leaders show an understanding of the continuous improvement process as it applies to their areas. Interviews and artifact review indicated that all divisions understood how effectiveness and efficiency in operations support student achievement and success.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Data from state assessments are communicated and analyzed in a timely manner.
- Continuous improvement in the area of data usage is encouraged and supported.
- Assessment results are communicated to stakeholders through a variety of methods.
- System support staff use data to analyze effectiveness of operations.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Establish systemic processes for analysis and use of school-based data, including the PoI process, subgroup data analysis, and related professional learning
- Clarify teacher understanding of how data are used to inform the school and district improvement process

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Jefferson City Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Documenting & Using Results" standard.

## Standard 5: Resource & Support Systems

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

**Description:**

The system has a history of recruitment at regional and state job fairs; in some years it has hosted its own local job fair. Because of budget constraints and low turnover in recent years, JCSS has focused some efforts on increasing minority representation on its staff, though district staff and stakeholders indicated that these efforts need to continue. 100% of staff – both certified and paraprofessional – are rated Highly Qualified, according to documents provided to the QAR team, indicating that staff are assigned appropriately. Many paraprofessionals are actually fully licensed teachers; interviews indicated that a significant number of teachers have obtained teaching positions by first serving as paraprofessionals. The system has in place a program for mentoring both teachers new to the professional and to the district, as



attested by interviews with school level personnel.

Professional learning programs are part of the JCSS comprehensive improvement plan and each school's improvement plan. Interviews with system-level support staff showed a thorough understanding of the importance of ongoing training for all staff members, including transportation, child nutrition, paraprofessional, and technology support staff members. The system avails itself of professional development opportunities offered through the Northeast Georgia Regional Education Service Agency, the University of Georgia Educational Technology Center, and other consortia. In addition, the system has targeted professional development efforts to improve student writing performance as well as technology implementation and integration. Professional development programs and plans are aggregated in the district's Comprehensive LEA Implementation Plan and federal Title IIA plan.

The system has traditionally stayed within the state guidelines for class size at all levels, but has asked, and been granted, waivers from the Georgia State Board of Education to increase class size owing to budgetary constraints. Increases in class size in recent years was noted as an area of concern by some parents and by internal stakeholders.

Interviews with system-level leaders and board members showed a collaborative, participatory method for developing the annual budget, beginning in late winter and concluding in the late spring. JCSS has a history going back 25 years or more of fiscal efficiency combined with high achievement. Documents and interviews showed that JCSS currently ranks 179 out of 180 systems in the state in terms of per pupil expenditures; it also ranks among the very highest-achieving systems in the state. Interviews in schools indicated a widespread appreciation for the fiscal responsiveness of the central office and the board of education in meeting the needs of schools and students, particularly in their ability to make the best use of every dollar that comes into JCSS. State austerity funding has resulted in reductions of over \$8 million over the last decade, resulting in recent years in furlough days and a consequent reduction in instructional time and teacher work days.

The system has not increased its millage rate in a number of years, though board members indicated that this might be necessary in the future. The need for conversations with the community regarding the continued impact of austerity budgets was cited by system leaders.

The system has checks and balances in place to ensure proper implementation of budgetary processes and procedures, including appropriate use of federal and state funds. Artifacts available at the central office and through the Georgia Department of Education provide evidence that the system is audited annually by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts.

Interviews with the system staff and artifacts showed that the system is intentional in constructing and maintaining sites. The system has used Special Purpose Local Option Sales Taxes (SPLOST) and bond levies to build Jefferson Academy and to renovate and expand facilities at other schools. The system has invested considerable resources through its SPLOST funds in recent years to improve access to instructional technology in its classrooms. The system has developed a three-year technology plan through 2014. Some stakeholders indicated that JCSS has not been an early adopter for instructional technology but is readily embracing its potential for transforming student learning. Stakeholders throughout the system expressed concern about unequal access to instructional technology among the schools. The QAR team noted abundant technology in the elementary and, in particular, the Jefferson Academy. The system is exploring the possibility of instituting a "Bring Your Own Technology" program, requiring a waiver from state policies on student use of technology brought from outside the school, to foster 21st century learning methods.

The system has developed comprehensive system and school-level crisis and safety plans. Stakeholders provided evidence that staff and students are well-practiced in handling various kinds of emergencies. Students affirmed that they are provided training in maintaining personal safety, including anti-bullying and cyber bullying awareness.

Interviews with system personnel offered evidence that JCSS provides and coordinates support services that meet the health, counseling, nutrition, safety, co-curricular, transportation, and special learning needs of all students. The system has school nurses and counseling services at all schools. Some personnel are shared between schools. The system's child nutrition department is now part of a consortium that provides higher quality nutritional services at lower cost to the system. The system has expanded its transportation services in recent years, having constructed a new transportation center, and improved the safety and communication equipment on its buses. The system has a strong history of athletic programs, notably a 40-year history of hosting the Georgia High School Olympics, among other events. In addition, the system has prioritized providing arts programs, vocational programs (including career awareness programs), and cultural exchanges. The system uses an inclusion model to service special needs students, with the vast majority of its students mainstreamed.

JCSS partners with the community to provide mentoring programs for students. In addition the Jefferson School System Foundation funds scholarships, special grants, supplements, and other special projects, including the Total Person Program at the high school.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- JCSS shows exemplary management of limited resources in order to maximize services and to renovate facilities.
- The system provides a full range of instructional programs and student support services to all students, many of them in collaboration with community partners.
- The system has a strong record of human resources practices, including personnel recruitment/retention, staff mentoring, and professional growth.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Establish opportunities for community dialogue regarding the impact of austerity budgets on educational programs and services.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the Jefferson City Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Resource & Support Systems" standard.

## Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications & Relationships

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

### Description:

Interviews with stakeholders and system leaders helped the team understand the significance of the school system to the community. Residents of Jefferson take great pride in their system. All stakeholders communicated high expectations in the areas of academics, athletics and the arts. Many faculty and staff return to Jefferson to work following college or a short move to another location. The pride in the school system by everyone interviewed was undeniable.

Leadership in the system is consistent and stable leading to a culture that promotes excellence in the school system. Student needs are a priority. System and school leaders use a process for identifying needs that includes data review, surveys, interviews with students that leads to agreement on the focus areas. Many stakeholders discussed writing, math and technology as priority areas. The vision and mission of the school system are reviewed periodically.

The Jefferson City School System has a history of community support and involvement. Stakeholders interviewed communicated an understanding of the vision of the system, belief in the outcomes for all students and a commitment to their schools. When asked, stakeholders could explain the meaning of the system mission and agreed the students left the system prepared for the next step. Interviews provided evidence that a system of outreach to minority and other subgroup stakeholders needs to be addressed. Some parents indicated they were not asked to submit honest feedback.

Collaboration was evident by the many opportunities for involvement at the schools and in organizations that support students. An active foundation supports a unique Total Person Program, designed to provide opportunities for students in the area of fine dining, theater, museum visits and community service. The foundation funds scholarships for students who excel. Other partnerships exist in athletics and the arts. There is great pride in the Georgia Olympics held at Jefferson High School for the past forty years. One system leader said the event was a great way to communicate and model excellence. The school system partners with the community to maximize the use of facilities for meetings, games, clubs, etc. A board retreat is held each spring at which time the board members review student data, financial reports and facility needs to set the goals for the following year. A community breakfast kicks off each school year. Over 500 people attend this event where the Superintendent unveils the priorities for the year. Board members and all JCS staff participated in a technology showcase hosted by the University of Georgia Educational Technology Center at the beginning of this year. This gave everyone the opportunity to use various types of available technology.

Transitions from building to building are preceded by parent meetings and a chance for students to spend a day in their next school. Parents are able to have immediate feedback on their child's progress by use of the Infinite Campus. Parent conferences yield high participation.

The school system offers course work for students in dual enrollment and Georgia Virtual High School as a partnership. The leadership is proud of off-campus opportunities for many students both in Georgia, Washington,DC, and overseas. An exchange program with a high school in Scotland brings students to Jefferson High School every two years and students from Jefferson visit and reside in homes in Scotland.

Artifacts and interviews provided evidence that the system solicits stakeholder knowledge and skills through surveys, community forums, volunteers (booster club, classroom speakers). The stakeholders serve the school system willingly and often. The QAR team found substantial evidence that the system engages the community in the work of the schools and long term planning though some populations were not represented. Parents indicate information was available but input was not solicited in a systematic fashion. Stakeholders indicated a desire to be more involved. At the present time evidence does not indicate stakeholder survey data systematically used in the improvement process. Interviews of system staff and faculty provided evidence of a commitment to increase horizontal and vertical articulation.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Represented stakeholder groups communicate high commitment and great pride in the JCS.
- The system documents its many strategies to communicate information about its processes, performance, and priorities to its stakeholders through multiple methods.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Research and implement various methods to involve all stakeholders in the system and the school improvement planning process.
- Devise a more systematic, ongoing approach to solicit purposeful, honest feedback from all stakeholders including minority and other sub groups (ELL, Special Education, etc.).

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Jefferson City Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Stakeholder Communications & Relationships" standard.

## Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

**Description:**

JCSS has adopted a continuous improvement cycle entitled PRIDE, which stands for PLAN/REVIEW/IMPLEMENT/DETERMINE EFFECTIVENESS/EXAMINE RESULTS. A diagram of the cycle details specific activities that take place under each phase, explaining the responsibilities of school- and system-level personnel. While the rudiments of the process have been in place for sometime, system-level staff members said in interviews that they have refined the process earlier in the current school year. These personnel also indicated the need to set forth clearer timelines for the PRIDE process in order to make it fully useful to schools.

Artifacts showed that the system clearly maintains demographic, achievement, and operational data in order to set its continuous improvement course. The system develops an annual Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) using a state template; individual school improvement plans are aligned with the CLIP.

Artifacts shared with the QAR team showed stakeholder involvement in district and school improvement. Evidence included survey results for federal programs and the technology program, plus agendas and minutes of board meetings, school leadership teams, and school council meetings. Interviews at school

sites showed uneven and somewhat inconsistent stakeholder involvement in school improvement efforts, with some schools exhibiting wide and deep participation in development of school improvement planning and others with somewhat less engagement. Examination of individual school plans showed variances in the specificity and alignment of goals, actions, and measures in the plans. Some plans clearly communicated the measurable goals, actions, and strategies designed to improve achievement; the high school plan in particular appeared unclear in the relationship between the meaningful actions, goals, and measurable outcomes. One school (Jefferson Middle School) has developed a one-page Action Plan Summary diagram, with the main focus ("Promoting Engagement Through Writing and Technology Integration") at the center, with specific content-area actions radiating outwards. A list of common themes also is visible.

Central office staff affirmed that the PRIDE process is designed to improve alignment of the individual school plans with the CLIP. School leadership members at one school indicated that the elements of the PRIDE cycle had been in place for a number of years, but that the new model had refreshed and clarified the process for school-level stakeholders. Examination of the plans showed that all schools' plans had a strong focus on increasing learning for students and closing achievement gaps. Data examined by the team showed that even with significant school population growth in recent years, the system's achievement has been sustained or increased. All schools have established active committees designed to engage and empower school personnel in pursuit of school improvement goals.

Central office staff discussed some of the professional learning initiatives of recent years, including Learning Focused Instruction, data analysis and use, book studies (some initiated by and including school board members and other system leaders), and use of instructional technology. Interviews with school-level stakeholders affirmed that professional learning is a strong focus at all levels, with the central office both facilitating professional development for the system (e.g., writing professional development, meeting the needs of gifted students and English language learners, etc.) and supporting individual teacher, department, grade-level, and school initiatives. The culture of each school indicated that a strong climate of professional learning exists. Although budget constraints have reduced some opportunities for consultants and conference attendance in recent years, staff at all schools affirmed that professional learning "redelivery" is an expectation for attendees at workshops, conferences, and other training sessions. Central office support staff affirmed the importance of training and upgrading of skills of all support staff – child nutrition workers, transportation workers, paraprofessionals, etc.

JCSS provides information about its improvement efforts through its Annual Report, a Community Breakfast, access to the Georgia Department of Education website. The QAR team found that the current website has outdated information; a new website is under development with current information. Data rooms are in place in all schools, which serve as training rooms and sites for leadership team meetings.

JCSS evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous improvement process by ongoing analysis of formative and summative data, which are reported through multiple channels. School leadership teams meet regularly to discuss methods of improvement. Learning walks are conducted for the purpose of improving instruction with a focus on higher order thinking skills. System faculty and staff have created a time line for full implementation of Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and work together to assure readiness. There is evidence of articulation within the building, but some stakeholders (including district office curriculum leaders) indicated the need for more systematic processes for vertical articulation K-12.

System personnel acknowledged the need for additional planning time for continuous improvement efforts. The impact of "furlough" days as a cost-cutting measure state-wide has reduced time available for meetings and professional learning. School-based leaders have compensated for this by providing common

planning or release time when feasible. In addition the system has empowered teachers to guide their own professional learning by facilitating redelivery of professional learning, institution of the “learning walks,” and adoption of consistent models for instruction, viz., the Learning Focused Instruction model implemented throughout the system.

The system provides direction and assistance to its school and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts by providing focus, resources, expertise, and ongoing monitoring. One significant example is a plan to implement the Common Core Standards, outlined in an artifact shared with the QAR team, outlining phases including raising awareness, deconstructing phase (developing curriculum maps, devising unit plans G, adjusting formative assessments), implementing vertical alignment processes, particularly at transition grade levels, and completing quarterly assessments, with time built in for refinement of assessments and professional development sessions. As part of the effort of support, the document states that “Instructional services staff will work with assistant principals and instructional lead teachers in February 2012 to develop a template for curriculum maps and establish a clear definition of deconstruction.” School personnel affirmed that the very lean central office staff was remarkably dedicated, accessible, and diligent in their support for the schools. JCSS has employed the Georgia Assessment of Progress on School Standards (GAPSS) at three out of four schools to assess performance in instruction, professional learning, school culture. All administrators in the system have participated in internal or external GAPSS reviews.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- JCSS has refreshed its continuous improvement process for stakeholders by adopting the PRIDE cycle.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Put processes in place to ensure that all school improvement plans clearly align goals, strategies, and measures.
- Use the Jefferson Middle School school improvement summary chart as a possible model for all schools.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Jefferson City Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Commitment to Continuous Improvement" standard.

## Quality Assurance Findings

The Quality Assurance Review Team examined the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance. The team reviewed the district's practices and methods to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results. The team provides the following findings in this area.

### Description

The QAR team found that JCSS is intentional and systematic in implementing quality assurance practices. Among a number of quality assurance systems in place is use of a “learning walk” process centered on the Learning-Focused Instruction framework. The system has trained a large number of its instructional staff in the use of the walkthrough protocol, which includes a common check sheet centered on instructional rigor, standards-based learning, etc., and has conducted walkthroughs in many classrooms. Teachers doing the walkthroughs visit classes one grade above and one below their own, thus providing a basis for improvements in curriculum alignment. The walkthrough sheets are collected but there as yet does not appear to be a systematic process for aggregating the data from the walkthroughs and using them as a means of assessing system-wide strengths and areas of need.

JCSS has strong systems in place for gathering and communicating results. The four schools visited, as well as the central office, had data rooms showing pertinent performance on various assessments, including longitudinal data from the state assessment database. QAR team members noted the results-focused orientation of the school system as a whole. Use of results was uneven throughout the system, however, with the two elementary schools especially responsive to the use of formative data to guide the Pyramid of Interventions, the system’s Response to Intervention program. External stakeholders had a strong sense of the high record of achievement of the system, including the very high graduation rate. Parents and students have access to student assignments, attendance, and achievement data through the Infinite Campus portal.

JCSS uses common school improvement templates based on state models. Documentation provided to the QAR team shows a common process for development of the plans, involving review of students achievement data, decisions regarding professional learning needs based on surveys and data analysis, alignment checks of school plans with the system-level improvement plan, and assessment of the financial needs of each school for the implementation of their improvement plan. The central office is involved in this process, though system staff – and an examination of the plans themselves – indicated that there is variance in the involvement of teaching staff and usability of the plans among the schools.

Curriculum planning is in place throughout the system, with horizontal alignment of curriculum and instruction promoted through grade level and departmental meetings. The system has devised curriculum maps and common assessments that are revised regularly by teams of teachers. These ensure a common foundation for pacing of instruction throughout JCSS. Opportunities exist for deepening and formalizing these processes, particularly in the upper grades, as noted in interviews with instructional leaders.

Evidence shows that ongoing professional development focuses are in place that is aligned with data-driven priorities. Recent initiatives have included professional learning in mathematics, technology, and differentiated instruction. The system has in two of its schools Instructional Lead Teachers who provide job-embedded professional development to teachers. With staff reductions in the curriculum support staff having occurred in recent years, the system has made constructive use of teacher leadership in the acquisition of professional knowledge and its “redelivery” to other staff members.

The standards overview to the QAR team, artifacts (particularly the very thorough and detailed Standards Assessment Report), and interviews provided evidence the system's planning for the district accreditation process has been an extensive process, involving distributed leadership, numerous stakeholders, valid tools for self-assessment, and thoughtful evaluation of the district's current state in relation to its future goals. Evidence showed that JCSS took concerted action in response to the required actions from its 2006 initial district accreditation report. In addition, system leaders required that all schools undergo an artifact-gathering process to ensure that they met school-level accreditation standards.

As JCSS looks toward its next five-year accreditation cycle, it is incumbent upon the system leaders to ensure that all stakeholders, particularly school-level personnel, understand the new AdvancED standards.

### **Strengths**

- The district is showing adaptiveness in building internal capacity in the face of budget constraints.
- The district has demonstrated a thorough understanding of and commitment to the process of district accreditation.
- The district has set high standards and accountability for schools in meeting AdvancED standards.

### **Opportunities**

- Develop methods for aggregating data from the classroom walkthroughs in order to gain broader and deeper understanding of system quality.
- Ensure that all schools are conversant with the new accreditation standards that will be in effect during most of the next five-year accreditation cycle.



## Schools Visited

The Quality Assurance Review team visited the following schools during the visit to the Jefferson City Schools on 03/04/2012 - 03/07/2012.

Jefferson Elementary School	415 Hoschton St	Jefferson	Georgia	30549-2770
Jefferson Academy	99 Dragon Dr	Jefferson	Georgia	30549-2722
Jefferson High School	575 Washington St	Jefferson	Georgia	30549-1018
Jefferson Middle School	100 Dragon Dr	Jefferson	Georgia	30549-9033

## Conclusion

The commendations and required actions in this report are designed to focus the school district on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student performance and system effectiveness. While powerful in potential, the commendations and required actions only have meaning when acted upon by the school district and its schools. The strength of this report lies in the school district's commitment to using the findings to continuously improve. The key is action. The school district is encouraged to use the report as a call to action, a tool to sustain momentum in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The team identified required actions for improvement that the school district will need to address. Following this review, the school district will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the district leadership, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for hosting the review team. The team wishes the district and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS-CASI-GA accreditation with AdvancED.

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# Appendix

## Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Dr. Michael E. Lodico, Chair/Lead Evaluator
- Dr. Joseph C. Kirkland Jr., Vice Chair (Jenkins County High School)
- Dr. Cathey Goodgame, Team Member (Renfroe Middle School)
- Mr. Don Breedlove, Team Member (Paulding County High School)
- Ms. Paula Steele, Team Member (Perry High School)

## AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems

The AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. As school districts reach higher levels of implementation of the standards, they will have a greater capacity to support ever-increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. Each of the seven standards listed below has corresponding indicators and impact statements which can be accessed at [www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org).

### **Vision and Purpose**

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

### **Governance and Leadership**

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

### **Teaching and Learning**

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

### **Documenting and Using Results**

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

### **Resource and Support Systems**

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

### **Stakeholder Communications and Relationships**

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

### **Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

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