



# **Accreditation Report**

## **Jefferson City Schools**

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# **Executive Summary**

## **Introduction**

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school system stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school system, and the kinds of programs and services that a school system implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school system with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the community will have a more complete picture of how the school system perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school system to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## **Description of the School System**

**Describe the school system's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school system serves?**

The Jefferson City School System is one of three school districts in Jackson County, Georgia. The mid-sized rural school system is a fast growing district. The student population, currently 3,620, has increased approximately 144% since 2001. Approximately 24% of the students are enrolled as out-of-district students. The percentage of non-resident students has decreased over the last few years due to space limitations within the various instructional programs and grade levels.

The school system is situated in the northeast section of Georgia approximately 60 miles north of Atlanta. JCS is comprised of four schools: Jefferson Elementary School (Grades PreK-2), Jefferson Academy (Grades 3-5), Jefferson Middle School (Grades 6-8), and Jefferson High School (Grades 9-12).

Student enrollment at each of the schools is as follows: Jefferson Elementary - 900 (including 109 pre-kindergarten students); Jefferson Academy - 801; Jefferson Middle School - 848; and Jefferson High School - 1,071.

The percentage of students by ethnic group is 80% White, 8% Black, 7% Hispanic, 3% Multi-Racial, and 2% Asian. The percentage of students with disabilities is 11%, the percentage of students who are eligible for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services is approximately 2%, and the percentage of students who receive gifted services is 13%. Currently, there are 10 migrant students enrolled in the school system.

The system's free and reduced lunch average is 28.64% (JES - 30.82%; JA - 32.26%; JMS - 30.33%; JHS -23.03%). Currently, Jefferson Elementary School and Jefferson Academy are eligible to receive Title I funding based on the poverty rate, and both schools operate a Title I Targeted Assistance Program.

There are 250 certified employees and 145 classified employees who provide quality educational services to the students enrolled in Jefferson City Schools. Approximately 80% of certified teachers hold advanced degrees. The school system provides a variety of curricular and extracurricular programs to meet the academic, physical, social, and emotional development of each individual student.

Although the Jefferson City School System has traditionally experienced high levels of success, there are challenges that must be addressed in order to continue the commitment to educational excellence. As mentioned previously, the school system has seen approximately 144% increase in student enrollment over the last several years. The rapid growth has led to more diversity among the student population, which brings about challenges in terms of ensuring appropriate programs are in place to address the individual needs of students.

With the increase in student enrollment, additional teachers have been hired at each of the schools. Principals are encouraged to establish autonomy within their schools; however, they recognize the importance of maintaining continuity and consistency throughout the system as they plan and implement programs to improve teaching and learning. As the number of teachers per grade level and content area expands, it is critical that principals establish ongoing opportunities for collaboration among teachers to ensure the continuity and consistency remain in place, which leads to equitable learning experiences for all students. Teachers must engage in the data teams process and use formative and summative assessment measures to gauge student progress toward learning goals. Absorbing the rapid growth while striving for higher SY 2016-2017

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standards of excellence can be a challenge.

Nonresident students in the school system have made significant contributions to the academic, athletics, and arts programs. The Jefferson City School System Board of Education appreciates the positive contributions nonresident students have made, and will continue to make to the overall success of the system. The Board of Education desires to continue to enroll out-of-district students in a fashion that will facilitate a quality instructional program for all its students.

Because the number of students residing in the city limits has grown and based on projected enrollments will continue to grow tremendously over the next few years, the percentage of out-of-district students has decreased. Board members and system and school leaders are challenged with determining how to continue allowing nonresident students to attend Jefferson City Schools while maintaining the commitment to providing quality educational services and accommodating the growth in terms of facilities.

As federal and state accountability measures become more demanding, additional challenges lie in closing the achievement gaps among various subgroups and continually increasing performance levels of all students. The school system has excellent state test results; however, there is always room for improvement. Schools are working diligently to increase the number of students performing at the highest level on standardized tests. The goal is to move students from one achievement level to the next.

Staff members are continually analyzing student performance data to determine which groups of students are not performing at expected levels. System and school leaders recognize the importance of examining options for incorporating more innovative and personalized approaches to teaching and learning if we are going to move to the next level of performance. It becomes a challenge to implement customized interventions and special programs designed to improve student performance with limited funding.

The system's leadership recognizes the importance of establishing 21st Century learning environments and expanding opportunities to increase learning through digital content and the integration of technology. Staying abreast of the rapidly changing trends and best practices along with equipment purchases is essential in assisting the Jefferson City School System in accomplishing its mission and vision to graduate fully functioning adults who are competitive in a global society.

The school system is in the process of moving from Bring Your Own Technology to a 1:1 initiative. For the implementation to effectively impact teaching and learning, it is critical to provide time, resources, and ongoing professional development, which will require additional funds. Funding reductions at the state and federal level make this a challenge.

Working with teachers to expand their knowledge on the use of differentiated instructional strategies to address the diverse needs of students, articulation among and between all levels of schooling, retention of highly qualified staff, and increasing stakeholder involvement and engagement in the overall school improvement process remain high priorities for system and school leaders. Continuous improvements in these areas will lead to increased student achievement.

The self-assessment process has exposed several areas for improvement. A systematic process is in place at the system level and each of its schools to examine the strengths and weaknesses, ensuring that the school system will continue to improve, meet the expectations of the community, and remain a school system that not only subscribes to the belief that while it is important to be an advocate for quality in public education, it is more important to serve as an example.

Demographic Information about the Jefferson Community  
(Based on information from the City of Jefferson website)

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Jefferson, a 200 plus year old community, is located in Northeast Georgia about an hour north of Atlanta along Interstate 85. Jefferson has a population of 10,195 and is the county seat of Jackson County with a population of 61,257 (2015 U. S. Census Bureau Estimates).

Jefferson is one of nine cities in Jackson County, Georgia and is named for President Thomas Jefferson. It is a picturesque community set among the gently rolling hills in the Piedmont region of Northeast Georgia. Jefferson, like many small towns in the south, has gradually made the transition from agriculture, to textiles, to a balance of commercial and industrial businesses.

The City's leadership is working to maintain Jefferson's small town character while strongly encouraging the development of a diverse economy that employs the growing local workforce.

Most people move to Jefferson for economic opportunity, its small town atmosphere, acceptance of newcomers and wholesome environment for raising a family. The Jefferson City School System is highly ranked, year after year, in terms of student achievement and SAT scores. The City offers a broad range of extra-curricular activities including a community theater and an award winning recreation department for adults and children of all ages.

Jefferson residents and visitors enjoy the benefits of small town living with convenient access to recreation, cultural activities, historical attractions, shopping, and other activities offered in larger cities, including Athens, Buford, and Gainesville. The community of Jefferson offers many potential resources and strengths.

The University of Georgia is located in Athens, approximately 18 miles from Jefferson. Other colleges and universities are located in close proximity to Jefferson City Schools, including Georgia Technical Institute, Athens Technical College, North Georgia College and State University, Lanier Technical College, Georgia Gwinnett College, and Piedmont College.

Older, wealthier, less diverse, and better educated than the state of Georgia as a whole, Jefferson 's demographics reflect the changing landscape of a city remade by staggering growth over the past decade and a half. Examining Jefferson's population over time illustrates the explosive growth of the city following the pre-recession building boom of the early 2000's. Due in part to the city's rapidly expanding boundaries and major annexations during the same period, Jefferson's population grew 166.5% from 2000-2015. While this growth has tempered following the Great Recession, the city's strategic location, proximity to major employment centers, and excellent public school system will continue to attract new residents and drive steady growth in the future.

According to the City of Jefferson Comprehensive Plan, official estimates foresee a total city population of 21,551 by 2025. Additionally, Jackson County is one of Georgia's fastest growing counties with a projected population of over 99,000 by 2040. The number one priority for local officials is determining how to house the growing population while maintaining the city's friendly, small town character and scenic rural location.

Affirming the city's reputation as a popular destination for growing families, 77.4% of Jefferson residents reside in family households, with an average household size of 2.83 persons. Jefferson residents primarily reside in owner-occupied housing and comparatively few (27.9%) occupy units in rental homes. Median home values in the city reflect Jefferson's recent building boom and newer housing stock, with 52.9% of homes built between 2000 and 2009 and median home values across the city are \$10,000+ greater than the Georgia average. This higher median home value correlates with the city's higher median income, \$56,140, or roughly \$7,000 more than the Georgia average. While the city remains largely white, demographic trends over the past decade show increasing diversity in the city, reflecting changes in Georgia's demographic profile over the same period. Jefferson's demographic trends reveal a growing, middle class, family-friendly small town with a high quality of life. Jefferson officials must be vigilant to protect the qualities that draw new residents to Jefferson, planning for additional growth and preserving the qualities that make the city a great place to call home.



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### Jefferson by the Numbers:

2015 Population Estimate: 10,195

2025 Projected Population: 21,551

2014 Median Age: 38.1

2014 Median Home Value: \$159,000

2014 Median Income: \$56,140

2014 High School Graduate or Higher: 87.1%

2014 Average Household Size of Owner-occupied Unit: 2.83 Persons

2014 Family Households: 77.4%

## System's Purpose

**Provide the school system's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school system embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

As emphasized in the system's vision statement, only through an adequate education can one acquire the skills and abilities demanded by an increasingly sophisticated job market. To assure such an educational experience, the Board of Education and system and school leaders acknowledge the importance of employing highly qualified staff members who are capable of providing a challenging, rigorous and relevant curriculum in a safe and orderly environment.

The alignment and articulation of curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments in support of maximizing achievement provides the foundation of the school system's work in graduating fully functioning adults.

The Jefferson City School System offers the state-approved pre-kindergarten program (five classrooms housed at Jefferson Elementary School). The Georgia's Pre-Kindergarten program content standards provide the foundation for instruction in these classrooms. The state approved curriculum, the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and Georgia Standards of Excellence, is used in grades K-12 in every content area, including fine arts, health and physical education, foreign language, and Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education. All teachers employ research-based instructional best practices to engage all students and prepare them for global competition in a 21st century learning environment.

Administrators, teachers, and support staff are dedicated and possess a strong sense of pride in their role in providing quality services to students. The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement of all students. Staff members are knowledgeable of content and best practices and committed to lifelong learning. Teachers have clearly defined expectations for student learning and are knowledgeable of curriculum standards.

A comprehensive academic core program is provided along with instruction in health and physical education (grades K-12), fine arts (grades K-12 chorus and art, grades 6-12 band, and grades 9-12 drama), foreign language (Spanish - grades 6-12; French - grades 9-12), and Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (grades 6-12).

Students in grade 8 are provided the opportunity to complete courses for high school credit. In addition, the Georgia Virtual High School and Edgenuity programs provide an opportunity for high school students to participate in online courses. Students at the high school level are also allowed to participate in the Move on When Ready/Dual Enrollment program. In addition, students in grades 3-12 are able to participate in various academic clubs and competitions, including Lego teams, Robotics club, and academic bowl.

The instructional services staff works closely with schools to ensure a clear understanding of the expectations for grade level standards. Professional learning opportunities and release time are provided for teachers to "unpack" the standards and to establish a common framework and structure for implementing the standards and related elements.

Teachers regularly collaborate to determine what students need to know, should be able to do, and how to assess mastery of content and skills. Curriculum maps have been developed by grade level and content area teachers to promote consistency in instructional delivery and to ensure standards are being taught in every classroom. Instructional services staff along with principals, assistant principals, and grade level/department chairpersons are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the state content standards and progress toward meeting SY 2016-2017

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expectations for student learning.

The Jefferson City School System's instructional learning program is managed by four schools. Each program is linked together to serve the targeted needs of all children. Teams of teachers work collaboratively to determine the learning needs of students. The needs are based on data from student test scores and daily performance measures. Teachers regularly review student achievement and other performance data to adjust or create instructional programs and strategies to meet the diverse needs of all students.

The program strategies are formed into action plans and evaluated regularly to determine effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Action plan goals articulate expectations for student learning, and action plan strategies develop the instructional means for achieving goals. Frequent evaluation through common assessments, curriculum map and unit plan review, and state testing ensures students are achieving learning goals, meeting the curriculum expectations, and fulfilling the mission and commitments of the system and its schools.

The system's leadership strives to recruit and retain highly qualified personnel necessary to deliver rigorous instruction, generate and manage resources that support a quality instructional program, partner with the community to ensure continuous improvement and academic success for all students, and maintain and upgrade facilities to meet the challenging instructional needs of students and staff and accommodate current and anticipated growth.

There is a comprehensive Response to Interventions (RTI) process in place that allows administrators, teachers, parents, and students to collaboratively develop and implement strategies to address specific learning and behavioral needs of students who are performing below expectations. Emphasis has been placed on making sure the RTI practices are aligned across all four schools and consistent programs are used for progress monitoring and universal screening.

The co-teaching model is implemented in grades K-12 in order to provide students with disabilities greater access to the general education curriculum. This particular program model has led to increased student achievement among students with disabilities as a result of highly qualified special education teachers working collaboratively with regular education content area specialists to deliver instructional content in a learning environment surrounded by high expectations for performance.

Support programs have been redesigned to better meet the diverse needs of students. Remedial education programs are provided for students who are experiencing academic difficulty. Based on a review of student performance data, the school system has recently implemented a digital foundational reading intervention program in grades K-2 in an effort to ensure all students are reading proficiently by the time they enter grade 3. Additional software programs are in place to provide remediation for those students who are struggling to reach proficiency in language arts and mathematics in grades K-12.

System and school leaders are focused on refining the Jefferson Measures of Academic Progress (JMAP) strategic assessment and data teams plan to ensure common formative assessments aligned to state standards are in place across grade levels and content areas, and performance results are used to diagnose the success of teaching and learning. Opportunities for acceleration and enrichment are provided to those students who are achieving above the expected rate.

System and school leaders allocate and protect instructional time to support student learning. Instructional time at each school exceeds state requirements. In grades K-5, principals schedule an extended learning period that exceeds maximum number of required minutes to provide individualized remediation and enrichment opportunities for students. In grades 6-12, opportunities for remediation and enrichment are provided during connections or during an additional time segment designed for individualized instruction (e.g., Dragon Core, Content Connections, Math Support, RUSH, FIRE).

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There is a strong commitment to integrating technology to enhance teaching and learning. Technology is seen as a tool to increase student achievement and to prepare all students to be globally, competitive, fully-functioning adults as they exit Jefferson City Schools.

System and school leaders work collaboratively to maintain articulation among all four schools to facilitate achievement for all students. Transition days are scheduled for students in grades 2, 5, and 8 to ensure a smooth transition from one school to the next. Tours of the school and visits to classrooms are part of the transition activities. Parents are invited to attend orientation sessions to obtain information regarding procedures and processes involved in moving from one school to the next. The establishment of the Dragon PRIDE (Promoting Responsibility and Investing in Dragon Excellence) committee has provided a framework for various stakeholders working together to provide a seamless transition between schools.

There is a strong commitment to ensuring that the needs of all students are effectively identified and addressed. One of the Jefferson City School Board of Education goals is to have highly qualified personnel for all students. Jefferson City Schools has maintained 100% highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals for the past twelve consecutive years.

Administrators and teachers are constantly looking at ways to improve teaching and learning. At Jefferson City Schools, we strive to never be satisfied with current levels of performance and keep the question of how we can get better at the forefront of our thinking.

### School System's Vision and Goals

Mission of the Jefferson City School System Board of Education - To Graduate Fully Functioning Adults

In keeping with the Mission Statement of the Jefferson City School Systems-- To Graduate Fully Functioning Adults-- the Jefferson City Board of Education adopts the following vision:

The opportunities that were once available to the marginally trained are disintegrating. Now, more than ever, education is the foundation for prosperity. Only through an adequate education can one acquire the skills and abilities demanded by an increasingly sophisticated job market. To assure such an educational experience, we resolve to provide a highly qualified professional staff with a challenging, rigorous and relevant curriculum in a safe and orderly environment.

We hold ourselves accountable for preparing students to function in an environment characterized by global competition, diversity, abruptly changing job demands, and an absolute requirement for technical skills and abilities. Those who teach in the Jefferson City School System must never cease to learn or emphasize to students that learning will be a lifelong process.

As a Board of Education we face the challenge of balancing the opinions and values of the community with what are perceived to be the demands of the future. Consequently, standards and directions communicated by this Board must be evaluated regularly in order to reaffirm, alter or modify expectations. In conclusion, it is our belief that given a capable staff, adequate resources and an orderly and safe environment, all students can and will learn.

### Performance Goals

1. To maintain and improve student achievement by providing a challenging instructional program that meets the needs of all students.
2. To recruit and retain highly qualified personnel necessary to deliver rigorous and up-to-date instruction.
3. To maintain and upgrade facilities to meet the challenging instructional needs of students and staff and accommodate current and anticipated growth.

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4. To establish an effective electronic communication system for students, staff, parents, board members, and the community.
5. To generate and manage resources that supports a quality instructional program.

### District Commitments & Beliefs

To support the Jefferson City Schools' Mission Statement "To Graduate Fully Functioning Adults", we will:

1. Support the implementation of defining what is to be taught at each grade level and in each subject (Georgia Standards of Excellence, Common Core Georgia Performance Standards).
2. Support the implementation of assessing each student to determine if he/she has learned the content (Georgia Standards of Excellence, Common Core Georgia Performance Standards) using Georgia Milestones and other state-mandated and teacher-developed instruments.
3. Support the annual review of instructional practice including the support provided for students not meeting expectations and students exceeding expectations.
4. Support the annual review of communication patterns for sharing results with students, staff, parents, and community.
5. Facilitate the work of collaborative teams of teachers to determine priority areas of focus for student achievement.

### Jefferson Elementary School (PreK-2) - Commitments and Goals

1. We commit to differentiated instruction.
2. We commit to the use of assessments to guide instruction.
3. We commit to research-based strategies.
4. We commit to ongoing parent communication.
5. We commit to positive character development within a safe learning environment.
6. We commit to professional development to improve best practices.

### Jefferson Academy (Grades 3-5) - Commitments and Goals

1. We commit to research-based instruction in all content areas.
2. We commit to differentiated instruction.
3. We commit to the use of assessments to guide instruction.
4. We commit to a positive learning environment.
5. We commit to timely parent communication.
6. We commit to positive student behavior through character development.
7. We commit to utilizing current technology to enrich the learning environment, broaden independent learning, and support standards-based instruction.

### Jefferson Middle School (Grades 6-8) - Commitments and Goals

1. We commit to providing learning environments that are physically and emotionally safe.
2. We commit to assisting students to become independent and critical thinkers.
3. We commit to empowering students with responsibility and self-respect to make positive choices.
4. We commit to exposing students to differentiated learning experiences.
5. We commit to using a variety of assessments to guide instruction.
6. We commit to communicating with our stakeholders - students, staff, parents, and the community.

### Jefferson High School (Grades 9-12) - Commitments and Goals

1. We commit to providing exceptional academic, career and technology, fine arts, and extracurricular experiences that prepare students to become fully functioning adults.
2. We commit that our instructional program will develop and broaden the interests, aptitudes, and abilities of all students and result in increased standardized test scores.
3. We commit that our graduates will be contributing members of society with job entry skills, effective work habits, and the ability to use reasoning and problem solving skills.
4. We commit to that our students will participate in the democratic process and develop an appreciation for the contributions of the many different cultures of the United States.
5. We commit that the instructional program teaches respect, self-esteem, and critical thinking skills and encourages students to practice good physical and mental health.
6. We commit that our students will learn to use human and physical resources as they develop into lifelong learners.

## Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

**Describe the school system's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school system is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

The Jefferson City School System is proud of its accomplishments over the last three years. Student achievement results consistently exceed local, regional, state, and national averages. The school system ranks in the top four statewide on student achievement and other college and career ready performance indicators.

Jefferson Academy and Jefferson Middle School have been recognized as National Title I Schools. The school system has been recognized as a Title I Reward District based on a three-year average of student performance results on state-mandated assessments. Jefferson High School has been recognized as an AP Honor, STEM, STEM Achievement, and AP Humanities School based on student performance on Advanced Placement exams. The graduation rate has increased from 85% to 96.1% over the last three years.

In the areas of curriculum and instruction, system and school leaders have worked diligently to refine the data teams and Response to Interventions processes to ensure consistent practices are in place across the school system. Emphasis has been placed on aligning resources in order to have consistent measures to gauge student performance and diagnose skill deficiencies. We have seen improvements in our practices over the last three years and will continue to refine the work in these areas.

Goals and commitments established by system and school leaders and other stakeholders over the last three years are as follows: (1) increasing student achievement; (2) increasing student growth; and (3) increasing professional growth. Efforts have been made to implement strategies across the four schools to accomplish the goals. Ongoing work has been done to emphasize the importance of vertical and horizontal alignment to ensure consistency within and across all schools. Improvements and changes in instructional practices and use of resources have led to increased performance levels as measured by universal screening and progress monitoring tools as well as state mandated assessments.

Additional course offerings have been added to enhance existing instructional programs, including a full-time agricultural education program at the middle school and full-time chorus program at both middle and high school (previously part-time programs). The Board of Education has approved the addition of a 2nd foreign language option, French, for students enrolled at Jefferson High School. Foreign language as a connections course offering is available for middle school students as well. In summer 2016, additional teachers were added to reduce class size and maximize student achievement.

The Board of Education has supported the purchase of additional software programs and technology equipment in order for schools to provide additional remediation and intense intervention for students who are struggling to perform at proficient levels of performance as measured by state standards.

The iRead program has been implemented in grades K-2 in an effort to ensure students are reading proficiently by the time they enter Jefferson Academy. The Board of Education recently approved purchasing additional Chromebooks for all 2nd grade classrooms to provide opportunities for teachers to work with students on their readiness to take state mandated assessments as they enter grade 3. Both initiatives resulted from 2nd and 3rd grade teachers and administrators analyzing student performance data and engaging in vertical alignment conversations centered around improving teaching and learning.

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The school system has placed an emphasis on increasing the number of teachers who complete gifted endorsements, ESOL endorsements, and Advanced Placement training in order to expand the use of various service delivery models as well as enhance skills in providing differentiated instruction to meet the learning needs of students.

The Jefferson City School System opened the new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Center located across from Jefferson Elementary School in the former public library facility and hired a STEAM Coordinator to work with teachers and students to implement cross-curricular activities aligned to state content standards.

Inter-disciplinary connections available in the center have enhanced existing instructional programs and encouraged innovation as students actively engage in real world problem solving, leading to a deeper understanding of skills and concepts to successfully master college and career objectives.

The establishment of the STEAM Center has not only been an enhancement to our existing instructional programs, it has also afforded and will continue to offer opportunities for multiple community and business leaders to partner with the school system to improve teaching and learning.

The STEAM Center is equipped with state-of-the art technology tools and equipment, including z-space virtual reality computer stations, AV Rover designed to make any setting a 3-D learning environment, Cubelets Robot Construction kits, 3-D Design and Printing, Makey Makey Invention Kits, iMovie Video Production, Garage Band Music Production, HTC Vive Virtual Reality/Google Tilt Brush, NAO Humanoid Robot Programming, Kano Computer Building Kits, Dot and Dash Robot programming, Meccanoid Robot Design and Programming, Vex Robotics, Lego Building and Design, and 3Doodler Creation Station.

The school system is in the process of expanding the STEAM Center to include a Bio STEAM Outdoor Learning Center. Approximately 178 acres of wetlands were recently donated to Jefferson City Schools. System and school leaders are in the process of working with stakeholders from community organizations, local universities, and other environmental agencies to develop a curriculum for students K-12 to provide access to the wetlands and actively engage them in authentic learning experiences while protecting and preserving the environment.

The mission of this project is to inspire K-12 students to understand, appreciate, and serve as stewards of wetland communities. The goal is to actively engage K-12 students in the exploration of outdoor environments and instill a sense of wonder and excitement for future learning about wetland communities and other natural areas within our city, state, country, and world.

The curriculum will focus on promoting active and social learning and will require students to construct knowledge out of their experiences - teachers will serve as facilitators as students engage in interactive, student-centered activities. The curriculum will be designed to follow an instructional model called the 5 E's Learning Cycle (Engage, Explore, Explain, Extend, Evaluate), which is also the foundation of learning at the JCS STEAM Center.

Our school system will be working with a UGA intern during the next several months to develop curriculum maps and lesson plans for teachers to use in the classroom and at the wetlands property.

The Board of Education and system leadership are committed to employing principles of sound financial management through careful budgetary analysis and planning. Jefferson City Schools maintained fiscal discipline and stewardship in light of recent economic decline. The financial efficiency rating is 4.5 out of 5 stars. The school system has a \$3.7 million general fund balance, \$25.4 million general fund budget, and \$30.4 million total budget. The millage rate is 15.609.



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The Board of Education has been recognized as an Exemplary School Board and "Top Five" in the Nation on the use of innovative practices and support for digital education.

Additional points of pride include the following:

- Award-winning Fine Arts program, including One Act Play State Championship
- State and national award-winning JROTC Air Force program
- Highly competitive athletic programs at middle and high school level, including over 50 state championships
- JHS Wrestling State Dual Champions for 16 consecutive years and State Traditional Champions for 16 consecutive years (next state competition scheduled for February 2017)
- State of the art facilities (most recent construction project - JHS Arena)

On July 1, 2016, the Strategic Waivers School System/Investing in Educational Excellence (SWSS/IE2) performance contract between Jefferson City Schools and the Georgia Department of Education became effective. The purpose of the performance contract is to enable the school system to progressively provide a diverse variety of educational programs tailored to individual needs and interests of all students.

Flexibility granted by the State Board of Education will ensure that the Jefferson City School System continues to provide educational experiences that allow students to globally compete in an ever-changing society by allowing the school system to implement a "myPath to learning" approach that customizes and aligns learning to post-secondary goals.

System and school leaders, in collaboration with various stakeholders, have prioritized challenges along with strategies and action steps that will lead to higher levels of success as indicated by student achievement measures. Having flexibility within certain provisions of Title 20 law and State Board of Education rules will afford the school system the opportunity to become more innovative with the use of best practices designed to optimize the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

The flexibility will allow our school system to move away from a "one size fits all" model and leverage resources to better meet individual needs of students. As our school system transitions to the "myPath for learning" approach, students will be offered unique pathways towards common standards-based learning targets. Teachers will be provided ongoing professional support as they make pedagogical shifts in instructional practices. Instruction, intervention, and feedback will become more individualized as teachers work with students to accomplish learning goals.

Areas for improvement over the next three years include continuing to examine ways to improve student performance and provide more personalized approaches to learning as outlined in the SWSS/IE2 performance contract, implement a 1:1 technology initiative to enhance teaching and learning, increase opportunities for vertical and horizontal alignment within and across schools, offer more high school credit courses in middle school, expand Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings at high school, install audio enhancement and security camera equipment in all classrooms to increase school safety as well as serve as a tool for improving instructional practices, and continue to examine additional ways to involve and engage stakeholders in developing and implementing plans associated with the areas of improvement listed above.

## Additional Information

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

Jefferson has a rich and proud educational tradition reaching back in time to the year 1818. Martin Institute, chartered in 1818, was the first privately endowed public high school in the United States, and a forerunner to the current Jefferson High School. The citizenry of Jefferson, and its Board of Education, enthusiastically pursue the mantle of excellence in all programs and scholastic offerings.

The Jefferson City School System is embraced by a community that supports a quality education for all students. All stakeholders share a strong commitment to educational excellence and hold high expectations for student learning. There is a strong level of community support and involvement in the educational process. The belief that exposure to excellence promotes excellence is evident in all aspects of the system's overall program, including the arts, athletics, and academics.

One of the greatest strengths of the Jefferson City School System is the tremendous level of support provided to the system and its schools from the Board of Education members.

Jefferson City Schools receive tremendous support from the Jefferson Foundation, chartered in 1983 as a tax-exempt 501-(C)(3) corporation. Independent of school administration, the Foundation is for the benefit of the school system with scholarships, special grants, supplements and other specific programs and projects as agreed upon with administration. The Foundation has provided financial assistance to Jefferson City Schools in an excess of \$350,000.

The Foundation is governed by a Board of Trustees. Some of the accomplished projects include renovation of the track and field facility, purchasing computer equipment for the high school, construction of the Heritage Courtyard, profits from brick sales used for new science equipment, and support for the beginning of a music department in all four schools. Ongoing projects include providing financing for the Total Person Program, managing provided scholarship funds, providing assistance to alumni reunions, and most recently, brick sales at the JHS Arena.

Off-site learning experiences are included as part of the overall instructional program. Students enrolled in high school have an opportunity to participate in the Scotland Exchange Program and World War II Europe Trip along with the National Parks Exploration. Students who are enrolled in middle school participate in an off-site visit to Andersonville, Georgia as part of the Civil War studies, along with a National Parks Exploration. Students enrolled in grades 4 and 5 are provided off-site learning opportunities in Tybee Island and Washington, D.C. Multiple opportunities exist for students to explore their interests through various sports, clubs, and other activities.

All four schools are successful in building partnerships with local businesses to provide quality educational services to all students. The school system is fortunate to have the support of over thirty Partners in Education. The business partners serve on school level committees, school councils, and provide resources to support the overall school programs. System and school leaders participate in annual planning sessions, sponsored by the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Education Committee, at the beginning of the year with Partners in Education to develop a support plan aligned to the school improvement goals and objectives.

The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders. The Jefferson City School System has a rich history of community support and involvement. From academics to athletics, the system partners with community stakeholders to support SY 2016-2017

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student achievement. System leaders consider the strong level of support as one factor for continued success within the academics, athletics, and arts programs. The residents of Jefferson take great pride in the Jefferson City School System and have high expectations for academic achievement and stakeholder satisfaction.

Two excellent examples of the true spirit of cooperation within the community and school environment include Georgia Olympics and the Jefferson Hometown Teams Smithsonian Exhibit.

In the early 1970's, Mr. Morris Bryan Jr., a former business leader and Board of Education member, proposed the idea of having all five Georgia High School Association classifications of track and field State Championships held at one location at the same time. In 1972, the first Georgia Olympics were held in Jefferson. Over 200 volunteers from Jefferson City Schools and the Jefferson Community have worked the annual event for the last 44 years.

The Georgia Humanities Council recently selected the community of Jefferson as one of twelve Georgia communities to host the Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America Smithsonian traveling exhibition in January and February 2017. A community wide effort and two years of diligent planning and hard work of the Hometown Teams committee made this event possible. The exhibit is on display at the Jefferson High School Arena and has brought visitors from all across the state to see how sports have not only shaped America but also local communities like Jefferson. The Jefferson City School System has demonstrated unsurpassed involvement and proficiency in athletics over the last 60 years.

The Jefferson City School System will celebrate 200 years of educational excellence in 2018. The Jefferson City School System has built a strong reputation across the state based on past and current performance in the areas of academics, athletics, and the arts as a result of the commitment to continuous improvement.

System and school leaders are continuously working with teachers, support staff, and other stakeholders to identify areas needing improvement. While we celebrate our successes, we realize there is always room for improvement in our everyday operations and practices.

### Self-Assessment Process

The Jefferson City School System earned initial district accreditation in 2006. The district re-accreditation review was in spring 2012. The school system acknowledges that accreditation is an ongoing school improvement process and increasing student achievement involves more than improving instruction. It is the result of how well all parts of the educational system work together to address the diverse needs of students and to achieve high levels of success.

Adherence to the AdvancED Standards is critical to the overall process of continuous school improvement, and system and school leaders must regularly engage in the self-assessment process in order to improve operations and practices. Following the external review in 2012, system and school leaders began working with various stakeholders to address the recommendations from the Quality Assurance Review Team:

- (1) Integrate systemic and systematic processes for the alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment, interventions, and school improvement planning, PreK-12.
- (2) Solicit meaningful involvement of all stakeholders to address budgetary and instructional challenges for 21st century learning.

The school system continues to revisit the recommendations and determine improvements that have been made as part of the annual school improvement process.

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System and school leaders met with appropriate stakeholders to conduct the self-assessment process in preparation for the upcoming External Review process. Each of the schools has established committees aligned to the AdvancED Standards for Quality, which includes administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, community members, and other stakeholders.

The school system established a timeline and procedures for each committee to ensure a consistent self- assessment process. The process for each standard committee included, but was not limited to, the following tasks:

- Review the Quality Assurance Team Report from 2012
- Review Accreditation Progress Report from 2014
- Review each indicator and brainstorm evidence and artifacts
- Review survey results and student achievement data and use results to inform/confirm ratings and information included in required reports
- Collaborate with school leaders to identify strengths, areas for improvement, challenges, and next steps for assigned standard
- Collect evidence to support ratings and information included in required reports

The Jefferson City School System has conducted a comprehensive self-assessment study to determine strengths and areas for improvement and will benefit from the feedback provided by the External Review.

# Self Assessment

## **Introduction**

AdvancED's Self Assessment (SA) diagnostic is based on the AdvancED Standards of Quality, which serves as the foundation of the accreditation and continuous improvement process. The SA is a valuable tool for collaboratively engaging staff members and stakeholders in purposeful, honest dialogue and reflection to assess the institution's adherence to the Standards, and guide its continuous improvement efforts. The SA includes the institution's self-ratings of and the evidence cited for each of the indicators, comments that explain the indicator's ratings and an overall narrative for each Standard. The results of the SA are reviewed by the External Review Team as one essential component of the preparation process for the institution's External Review.

## 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.

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	The system's process for review, revision, and communication of the purpose statement is documented. The process is formalized and implemented on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement focuses on student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District purpose statements - past and present</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Written District Quality Assurance Review procedures and documents that monitor its schools' adherence to the district purpose and direction</li> <li>•Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook)</li> <li>•Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness</li> <li>•Leadership Jackson, Community Breakfast, Board of Education Retreat documentation</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process for review, revision, and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor and maintain data about each school and provide feedback for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements</li> <li>•Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement</li> <li>•Examples of written stakeholder communications or marketing materials that portray the school purpose and direction</li> <li>•JCS PRIDE Cycle &amp; Description</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is evident in documentation and decision making. This commitment is regularly reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership and staff share high expectations for professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Statements or documents about ethical and professional practices</li><li>•The district strategic plan</li><li>•BOE Retreat Agendas, BOE Instructional Program Reports, Administrators' Meeting Agendas and Sign-In Sheets</li></ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Leaders at all levels of the system implement a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. All stakeholder groups are engaged in the process. Personnel maintain a profile with current and comprehensive data on student, school, and system performance. The profile contains analyses of data used to identify goals for the improvement of conditions that support student learning and that are aligned with the system's purpose. Improvement goals have measurable performance targets. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Leaders hold all personnel accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. The process is reviewed and evaluated. Documentation that the process yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available and communicated to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs</li><li>•Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings</li><li>•The district data profile</li><li>•The district strategic plan</li></ul>	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Areas of Strength:

The Jefferson City School System is committed to a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school system. The system and its schools have established clear expectations for student learning, which are aligned to the vision and mission and supported by internal and external stakeholders. Expectations for student learning provide the focus for assessing academic performance and system and school effectiveness. (1.3)



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The system and its schools engage in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success. The system-wide mission and commitment statements are the central focus of all planning documents. The system mission, vision, beliefs, performance goals, and school-level goals and commitments are reviewed and revised annually as part of the school improvement process.

The system provides guidance on the development of the School Improvement Plans, and system leaders collect and monitor data from each school, provide feedback on the results, and work directly with school leaders to allocate resources to support schools in achieving student success. System leaders review data regularly at Board of Education and leadership meetings to ensure the system remains focused on continuous improvement. (1.4)

At the beginning of each year, teachers meet by grade level or department to review the vision, mission, belief statements, and performance goals and to revise action plans based on statewide assessment and other performance data. Professional learning needs are identified as principals compile all action plans into an overall school improvement plan. The development and implementation of the PRIDE school improvement cycle (Plan, Review, Implement, Determine Effectiveness, Examine Results) has provided a framework for ensuring teachers and administrators engage in the process of reviewing and revision action plans, curriculum maps, instructional units, and formative assessments aligned to the system's vision and mission. (1.1, 1.2, 1.4)

School leaders meet with instructional services staff members to ensure that all requests for professional learning and resources are aligned to the goals and objectives outlined in the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP - system improvement plan). School improvement plans are used to determine resources needed to address student learning needs and to allocate professional learning funds to improve teaching practices. (1.4)

Board members, who serve on the instructional committee, periodically meet with groups of teachers and students at each school prior to the annual board retreat to obtain feedback regarding program strengths and weaknesses and barriers to improving performance. This information is used for future planning and making revisions to the school improvement plans and to ensure that everyone is working collaboratively to achieve the vision, mission, and goals of the system. (1.3)

Monthly leadership meetings along with quarterly College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) meetings allow system and school leaders to regularly review the vision, purpose, and goals to ensure that adequate progress is being made toward goals and objectives outlined in the school improvement plans. Fall and spring Board of Education retreats provide an opportunity for system and school leaders to work collaboratively with board members to review program and student performance data to determine if the vision, purpose, and goals are guiding the work of the system and its schools.

Principals are encouraged to establish autonomy within their schools; however, they recognize the importance of continuity and consistency throughout the system as they plan and implement programs to improve teaching and learning. All school-level initiatives are directly aligned to the goals and objectives outlined in the system improvement plan as well as with the system's vision, mission, and purpose.

During pre-planning, the system hosts an annual community breakfast, which provides an opportunity for community members, business partners, representatives from local educational agencies, and JCS staff member to partner in kicking off the start of a new school year. At this event, the Board of Education chairman presents an annual report of the system's progress, highlighting accomplishments within the academics, athletics, and arts programs, and provides information regarding budget and finance and future construction and facility projects. In addition, a guest speaker presents a motivational message aligned to the vision and mission of the school system, which reemphasizes a shared direction for the upcoming school year. (1.3, 1.4)

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The system is committed to providing challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. The Jefferson City School System ranks top 4 statewide on student achievement and other college and career readiness performance indicators. (1.3)

Jefferson High School has a high percentage of students participating in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and has been recognized as an AP Challenge, Merit, STEM, STEM Achievement, & Humanities School based on student performance on AP Exams. Based on spring 2016 AP scores, 303 students or approximately 30% of the student enrollment took at least one AP exam, with 163 (54%) scoring a 3 or above.

SAT and ACT scores consistently exceed state and national averages. Jefferson Academy and Jefferson Middle School have been recognized as National Title I Schools, and the Jefferson City School System is a Title I Reward District based on high levels of student performance on state-mandated assessments.

Approximately, 13% of the student population is served in the gifted program. Early Intervention, Remedial Education, Title I, and Special Education programs are provided for students who need learning support.

The school system is committed to instructional practices that include active student engagement. Emphasis is placed on improving instructional practices to ensure the needs of individual students are being met. Priorities outlined in the system's strategic plan and school improvement plans focus on depth of understanding of knowledge and skills and providing quality, personalized instructional experiences for all students. Integration of technology to support the delivery of content standards is emphasized in order to support teachers in discovering new ways to engage students in authentic learning activities.

The Jefferson City School System Board of Education has supported the establishment of the new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Center in order to provide extra tools and resources for students and teachers so they will have more opportunities to engage, explore, extend, explain, and evaluate lessons as well as their own creative ideas. STEAM is aligned with state standards and is designed to utilize cross-curricular and inter-disciplinary connections in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics to encourage innovation and the transfer of knowledge. It is driven by exploratory learning that requires students to actively engage in real world problem solving or inventing.

A system-wide commitment to continuous quality improvement ensures the vision, purpose, and goals guide the work of the school system and its schools. The Board of Education has a strong working relationship with the Superintendent. System leaders work closely with the schools to monitor programs and practices to ensure all procedures are aligned to the system's vision, purpose, and goals. System and school leaders take a hands-on approach to providing support to teachers and students and building relationships with parents and community members. A strong focus on teaching and learning provides the framework for everything we do in Jefferson City Schools. Effective teaching is the most important element in improving student performance. (1.4)

Actions to Sustain Areas of Strength:

The PRIDE school improvement planning cycle will continue to provide clear guidance to school leaders as they work with teachers, staff members, parents, students, and other stakeholders to set goals, identify resources, and implement programs and strategies designed to improve teaching and learning. School leaders will continue to review and revise plan descriptors that guide the development of the system improvement plan and use the system's goals in working with teachers and other stakeholders to develop building level plans.

System leaders will continue to prepare an annual report that is presented at various events, including a fall and spring Board of Education

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Retreat, Community Breakfast, and other community organizational meetings (e.g., Chamber of Commerce Superintendent's Overview, Leadership Jackson). The report provides an overview of state-mandated assessment results along with accomplishments and highlights within the academics, athletics, arts, and extra-curricular programs. The annual report has been and will continue to be an effective way to provide information about the successes and challenges of the school system to all stakeholders.

Student assessment results will be shared at monthly board and leadership meetings. Additionally, system leaders will continue to support the schools in the implementation of the PRIDE School Improvement Cycle. System and school level profile and performance data will continue to be reviewed at Annual Title I Parent Meetings, curriculum nights, school council meetings, parent-teacher organization meetings, school improvement planning meetings, grade level/department meetings, and other school events.

System and school leaders will continue to participate in monthly meetings, summer leadership retreats, and data analysis sessions to collaboratively review the vision, mission, performance goals, and commitments and beliefs to ensure our actions are leading to student success.

### Areas in Need of Improvement:

Survey results indicate that stakeholders believe there is a shared vision and commitment to educational excellence in Jefferson City Schools; however, in conducting the self-assessment, system and school leaders have realized that improvement is needed in terms of ensuring that all stakeholders understand the components of the actual school improvement process and how they relate to the overall mission, vision, beliefs and commitments.

Principals review the mission, vision, and system and school beliefs and commitments at curriculum night, school council, parent-teacher organization, and school-level committee meetings, and other events. The mission and vision and performance goals are posted on the system website and visible in each of the schools.

The Jefferson City School System communicates its mission and commitment statements to stakeholders, including students, parents, business leaders, and other community members through the website, social media, email system, parent portal, school marquees, system- and school-level meetings, media publications (e.g., newsletters, student agendas, handbooks), and during parent-teacher and advisement planning sessions.

School board members and system and school leaders are committed to increasing opportunities to involve parents, community members, and business leaders in helping achieve the mission of graduating fully functioning adults. Through continuous community interactions and meetings, system and school leaders are able to establish and build understanding of and commitment to the vision statement among the school system and its stakeholders.

### Plans to Improve Areas in Need of Improvement:

In order for continuous improvement to occur, it is critical for administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and other stakeholders to engage in the process of examining system and school operations on an ongoing basis to ensure alignment of procedures and processes with school improvement goals. The cycle for continuous improvement must be reviewed and revised regularly, in collaboration with various stakeholders, to ensure effectiveness. System and school leaders will work collaboratively to implement a more systematic and structured approach to reviewing and revising the system's purpose and direction. Each spring, the system will work with a wide range of stakeholders to review purpose statements to ensure that improved student achievement continues to be at the forefront of all decision-making and operations. System and school leaders will work with school council members to develop parent-friendly documents that highlight the system's purpose, direction, and commitment statements to ensure that all stakeholders have a true understanding of system and school

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goals.

## Governance and Leadership

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

Overall Rating: 2.83

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	Policies and practices support the system's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices promote conditions that support student learning, effective instruction, and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices regarding professional growth of all staff. Policies and practices provide requirements, direction for, and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Professional development plans</li> <li>•Student handbooks</li> <li>•Governing body policies, procedures, and practices</li> <li>•Staff handbooks</li> <li>•Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	The governing body has a process to ensure that its decisions and actions are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a code of ethics, and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The governing body complies with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations, and functions as a cohesive unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Proof of legal counsel</li> <li>•Governing authority training plan</li> <li>•Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies</li> <li>•Historical compliance data</li> <li>•Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest</li> <li>•Governing code of ethics</li> <li>•BOE Retreat Documents, JCS Board Policy Manual</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	The governing body protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for improvement in student learning and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations of the system and its schools. The governing body maintains a distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of system and school leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District strategic plan</li> <li>•Examples of school improvement plans</li> <li>•Roles and responsibilities of school leadership</li> <li>•Roles and responsibilities of district leadership</li> <li>•Survey results regarding functions of the governing authority and operations of the district</li> <li>•Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation</li> <li>•Agendas and minutes of meetings</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders and staff throughout the system align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. They expect all personnel to maintain high standards and to hold students to high standards in all courses of study. All leaders and staff are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system support innovation, collaboration, shared leadership, and professional growth. The culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan</li> <li>•Professional development offerings and plans</li> <li>•Examples of decisions aligned with the school's purpose statement</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans</li> <li>•Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs</li> <li>•Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction</li> <li>•BOE Retreat Documents; JCS PRIDE Cycle</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders sometimes communicate effectively with stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback from stakeholders, work collaboratively on school improvement efforts, and provide some leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' efforts result in some stakeholder participation and engagement in the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Minutes from meetings with stakeholders</li><li>•Survey responses</li><li>•Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan</li><li>•Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan</li></ul>	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	The focus of the criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation is improving professional practice throughout the system and improving student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are regularly implemented. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice throughout the system and improve student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation</li><li>•Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation</li><li>•Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice throughout the system and student success noted</li><li>•Representative supervision and evaluation reports</li></ul>	Level 3

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

Areas of Strength:

The Jefferson City School System Board of Education establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools. JCS has an elected school board, consisting of seven members (including the Superintendent who is appointed by the board members). Consistent with local board policy, the function of the Board is to legislate, and the function of the Superintendent is to execute. The Board sets policy, and the Superintendent administers the policy. (2.1, 2.2)

All board policies are posted on the system's website through e-board/Simbli, provided by the Georgia School Boards Association. Online policies and paperless board agendas allow the Jefferson City School System Board of Education to centralize key data to use in the decision-making process and provide greater access and communication with stakeholders. (2.5)

The Superintendent is responsible for providing professional advice and administering policies effectively. The Board of Education is responsible for evaluating administrative advice for final policy decisions and clearly understands its role as policy makers, allowing the administration and staff to be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school district.

Proper administration of the schools is most vital to a successful educational program. The general purpose of the system's administration is

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to coordinate and supervise, under the policies of the Board, the creation and operation of an environment in which students learn most effectively. The Superintendent, principals, and all other administrative personnel have the authority and responsibility necessary for his/her specific administrative assignment and are accountable for the effectiveness with which the administrative assignment is carried out. (2.1, 2.3, 2.4)

The JCS Board of Education is committed to operating in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible. In addressing the issues of authority and accountability, the Board has adopted a Code of Ethics as part of its governance functions. (2.2)

The Jefferson City School Board of Education policies recognize and preserve the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system. The Superintendent is appointed to provide leadership in developing, achieving, and maintaining the best possible educational programs and services in such a manner that each individual student enrolled in the school system may be provided with a complete, valuable, meaningful, and personally rewarding education. (2.6)

The Board of Education establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system. Measures are taken to ensure there is a process in place for stakeholders to submit proposals for policy development and feedback on proposed policies. (2.1, 2.2, 2.5)

The Jefferson City School System maintains access to legal counsel through Harben & Hartley to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations. The system's attorneys review all proposed policies prior to presentation to the public to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. Legal representatives provide advance notice to the Superintendent for all future policies needed to maintain compliance with local, state, and federal laws. The Georgia School Boards Association also provides strong policy support to Jefferson City Schools. The Superintendent and board members regularly attend legislative update sessions provided through the Georgia School Boards Association, Georgia School Superintendents Association, and Northeast Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency. (2.5)

As policies are revised or newly adopted, the Superintendent provides information at monthly administrators' meetings to ensure principals are fully aware of policies and procedures that need to be disseminated to staff members and included in student and faculty handbooks and/or posted in visible locations throughout the schools. All principals adhere to guidelines regarding distribution of policy to staff members, parents, and others. (2.2, 2.3)

The Jefferson City School Board of Education is committed to ongoing professional development in an effort to improve effectiveness in their role as board members and to stay abreast of the most current research and innovative practices designed to improve teaching and learning. The Board maintains membership in the Georgia School Boards Association and participates as fully as possible in the activities of the state and national level organizations. The Board complies with all training requirements as outlined by the Georgia Department of Education and Georgia School Boards Association. (2.2)

The Jefferson City School Board of Education is an Exemplary School Board and ranks in the top 5 nationwide on the use of innovative practices and support for digital education. The financial efficiency rating for Jefferson City Schools is 4.5 out of 5 stars based on College and Career Ready Performance Indicators (CCRPI) measures. Board members and system and school leaders understand their obligation to build community support, secure adequate resources, and serve as good stewards of the system's resources. (2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5)

The Jefferson City School System uses multiple methods to evaluate system effectiveness and its impact on student performance. The PRIDE (Plan, Review, Implement, Determine Effectiveness, Examine Results) school improvement cycle ensures that all stakeholders are engaged in a quality process that consistently leads to improved student performance. (2.4, 2.5, 2.6)



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System and school leaders support collaborative networks of stakeholders by establishing processes and practices that promote opportunities to provide leadership and contribute to the decision-making process. School councils, school leadership teams, and school-level committees provide multiple opportunities for stakeholder groups to engage in the process of continuous school improvement through the review of student achievement and other performance data. (2.5)

Each principal has established a leadership team who works in support of the vision, mission, and beliefs and commitments. Leadership meetings are held monthly in addition to regularly scheduled faculty and staff meetings, which provides an additional opportunity for stakeholders to serve in leadership roles and be involved in the decision-making process. The instructional service staff members conduct monthly leadership meetings with principals and assistant principals to collaboratively review student performance and other data and policies and procedures relative to system and school operations. (2.3)

The Jefferson City School System believes all children should have an equitable opportunity to receive quality instruction. The system is committed to ensuring that the needs of all students are effectively identified and addressed by employing highly qualified teachers and support staff to deliver rigorous instruction. Having four schools makes it easy to ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation is in place. Resources are allocated to the schools based on number of students and its needs as outlined in school improvement plans.

There is a commitment to equitable programming and services for all students. The co-teaching model is implemented in grades K-12 in order to provide students with disabilities greater access to the general education curriculum. This particular model has led to increased student achievement among students with disabilities as a result of highly qualified special education teachers working collaboratively with regular education content area specialists to deliver instructional content in a learning environment surrounded by high expectations for performance.

Opportunities for acceleration and enrichment are provided to those students who are achieving above the expected rate. For these students, schools have implemented differentiated instructional strategies designed to move students to the next level of learning. Accelerated programs include gifted instruction, technology-based learning, Advanced Placement course offerings, academic clubs and competitions, Georgia Virtual High School, and dual enrollment college coursework. Additionally, principals create master schedules to maximize gifted segments for students eligible for these services.

The Jefferson City School System is committed to using technology as a tool to increase student achievement and to prepare all students to be globally competitive fully-functioning adults as they exit Jefferson City Schools. All system and school leaders understand the role of technology in providing a 21st Century education designed to support innovation and assist students in acquiring necessary skills to function as productive adults in a rapidly changing, technological society.

The policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities for students and support the development of new ideas for school improvement and increased student achievement.

Actions to Sustain Areas of Strength:

The Jefferson City School System operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student achievement and system effectiveness. The school system will continue to utilize the PRIDE school improvement process in order to effectively review the progress toward meeting system and school improvement goals while focusing on the purpose and the direction of the system.

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The AdvancED surveys provided a more streamlined approach and yielded more consistent data across the four schools; therefore, the school system will continue to administer the surveys in the future.

### Areas in Need of Improvement:

The PRIDE (Plan, Review, Implement, Determine Effectiveness, and Examine Results) school improvement cycle enables teachers and administrators to continuously use student assessment data to inform instructional practices and improve student achievement. The use of surveys provides another avenue for evaluating system effectiveness and its impact on student performance. Survey results are used to make program adjustments and improvements. Through the completion of the self-assessment and analysis of stakeholder survey data, system and school leaders recognize the need to refine the survey process to be more consistent throughout the system and to provide additional methods for seeking input from parents and other stakeholders.

In addition, there is a need to expand the current school improvement process to include more emphasis on long-range strategic planning. Board members and system and school leaders participate in annual board retreats to review program results and establish plans for improvement. This process needs to be expanded to include active participation from a wider range of stakeholders, which will help to sustain the current focus toward the vision and mission of the school system, while involving more individuals from various groups in carrying out the goals outlined in the strategic and school improvement plans.

### Plans to Improve Areas in Need of Improvement:

System leaders and board members will continue to align all decisions and actions toward continuous improvement. The Board of Education will continue to conduct two retreats each year to review progress toward goals outlined in the strategic and school improvement plans. The PRIDE school improvement process will be expanded to include more emphasis on long-range planning. Board members and system and school leaders will establish more opportunities for stakeholders to become involved in the long-range planning sessions.

## 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.

Overall Rating: 2.75

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Curriculum and learning experiences in each course/class provide all students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills. There is some evidence to indicate curriculum and learning experiences prepare students for success at the next level. Like courses/classes have equivalent learning expectations across the system. Teachers in all schools individualize some learning activities for each student in a way that supports achievement of expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Course, program, or school schedules</li> <li>•Course or program descriptions</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Lesson plans</li> <li>•Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices</li> <li>•Posted learning objectives</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Using data from student assessments and an examination of professional practice, system and school personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose. There is a process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction, and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level. The continuous improvement process ensures that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Curriculum guides</li> <li>•Common assessments</li> <li>•Standards-based report cards</li> <li>•Surveys results</li> <li>•Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices</li> <li>•Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps</li> <li>•Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	Teachers throughout the district plan and use instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills. Teachers personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of students when necessary. Teachers use instructional strategies that require students to apply knowledge and skills, integrate content and skills with other disciplines, and use technologies as instructional resources and learning tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation</li> <li>•Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource</li> <li>•Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool</li> <li>•Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge</li> <li>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs</li> <li>•Interdisciplinary projects</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	System and school leaders formally and consistently monitor instructional practices through supervision and evaluation procedures to ensure that they 1) are aligned with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning, 2) are teaching the approved curriculum, 3) are directly engaged with all students in the oversight of their learning, and 4) use content-specific standards of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Curriculum maps</li> <li>•Supervision and evaluation procedures</li> <li>•Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions</li> <li>•Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices</li> <li>•Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs</li> <li>•Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success</li> <li>•BOE Retreat Documents</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	All system staff participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both informally and formally. Collaboration often occurs across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions. Staff members have been trained to implement a formal process that promotes discussion about student learning and the conditions that support student learning. Learning, using, and discussing the results of inquiry practices such as action research, the examination of student work, reflection, study teams, and peer coaching occur regularly among most system personnel. System personnel indicate that collaboration causes improvement results in instructional practice, system effectiveness, and student performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees</li><li>•Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings</li><li>•Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning</li><li>•Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration</li><li>•GCA Training Documentation; Vertical Alignment Documentation</li></ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	All teachers throughout the system use an instructional process that informs students of learning expectations and standards of performance. Exemplars are often provided to guide and inform students. The process includes multiple measures, including formative assessments, to inform the ongoing modification of instruction and provide data for possible curriculum revision. The process provides students with specific and timely feedback about their learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning</li></ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	Some system personnel are engaged in mentoring, coaching, and induction programs that are consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching, learning, and the conditions that support learning. These programs set expectations for system personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs with references to district and school beliefs and values about teaching and learning</li><li>•Records of meetings and informal feedback sessions</li><li>•Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff</li></ul>	Level 2

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Programs that engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education are designed and implemented. System and school personnel regularly inform families of their children's learning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Volunteer program with variety of options for participation</li> <li>•List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days</li> <li>•Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress</li> <li>•Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	School personnel implement and participate in a structure designed and evaluated by the system that gives them long-term interaction with individual students, allowing them to build strong relationships over time with the student. All students may participate in the structure. The structure allows the school employee to gain insight into and serve as an advocate for the student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Curriculum and activities of structures for adults advocating on behalf of students</li> <li>•Description of formalized structures for adults to advocate on behalf of students</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Master schedule with time for formalized structure</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Most teachers across the system use common grading and reporting policies, processes, and procedures based on criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These policies, processes, and procedures are implemented in most or all schools across grade levels and courses. Most stakeholders are aware of the policies, processes, and procedures. The policies, processes, and procedures may or may not be evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs</li> <li>•Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting</li> <li>•Course Syllabi, Student Handbooks</li> </ul>	Level 2

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning that is aligned with the system's purpose and direction. Professional development is based on assessment of needs of the system. The program builds capacity among all professional and support staff. The program is systematically evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Evaluation tools for professional learning</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•District professional development plan involving the district and all schools</li><li>•Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs</li></ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	System and school personnel use data to identify unique learning needs of special populations of students based on proficiency and/or other learning needs (such as second languages). System and school personnel are familiar with research related to unique characteristics of learning (such as learning styles, multiple intelligences, personality type indicators) and provide or coordinate related learning support services to students within these special populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•List of learning support services and student population served by such services</li><li>•Data used to identify unique learning needs of students</li><li>•Response to Intervention Handbook, Special Education Handbook, Gifted Education Handbook</li></ul>	Level 2

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

Areas of Strength:

As emphasized in the system's vision statement, only through an adequate education can one acquire the skills and abilities demanded by an increasingly sophisticated job market. To assure such an educational experience, the Board of Education and system and school leaders acknowledge the importance of employing highly qualified staff members who are capable of providing a challenging, rigorous and relevant curriculum in a safe and orderly environment.

The Jefferson City School System has high expectations for learning and ensuring academic success for all students. All students are provided with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level. The alignment and articulation of curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments in support of maximizing achievement provides the foundation of the system's work in graduating fully functioning adults. Ongoing collaboration among teachers and administrators on issues related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment ensure a seamless transition from grade level to the next and from one school to the next. Strong emphasis is placed on implementing practices that help to maintain continuity between schools. (3.1, 3.2, 3.5)

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The state-approved curriculum is used in grades K-12 in every content area, including fine arts, health and physical education, foreign language, and Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education. The Jefferson City School System is committed to providing instructional experiences that allow all students to maximize their potential through the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that facilitate achievement for all students. Multiple opportunities are provided for students to apply knowledge and use higher order thinking skills to complete an assigned task. (3.3, 3.6)

System leaders work closely with the schools to ensure a clear understanding of the expectations for grade level standards. Professional learning opportunities and release time are provided for teachers to "unpack" the standards and to establish a common framework and structure for implementing the standards and related elements. The Rigorous Curriculum Design provides guidance for teachers as they prioritize standards, analyze the Depth of Knowledge (DOK), develop curriculum maps, and create common assessments. (3.4, 3.11)

Professional development plans and timelines match the learning needs of students and the instructional needs of teachers. Survey results and student achievement data are used to determine professional learning needs of school leaders, teachers, and support staff. Technical assistance is provided for schools to ensure that purchased programs are scientifically based and/or evidence-based. Professional learning is aligned with nationally established criteria and helps teachers target their instructional practices towards the effective implementation of Common Core Georgia Performance Standards/Georgia Standards of Excellence. (3.1, 3.2, 3.11)

Teachers collaborate regularly to determine what students needs to know, should be able to do, and how to assess mastery of content and skills. Curriculum maps have been developed by grade level and content area teachers to promote consistency in instructional delivery and to ensure standards are being taught in every classroom. System and school leaders along with grade level and department chairpersons are responsible for monitoring the implementation of state content standards and progress toward meeting expectations for student learning. (3.5)

Teachers use the frameworks and curriculum resources provided by the Georgia Department of Education as a guide for delivery of instructional content. Student assessment results enable teachers to determine whether instructional strategies have been effective in addressing the academic needs of students. (3.2, 3.4, 3.10)

The Jefferson City School System's instructional learning program is managed by four schools. Each program links together to serve the targeted needs of all children, and teams of teachers work collectively to determine needs based on data from student test scores and daily performance measures. Instruction is adjusted based on data analysis to ensure diverse needs of students are being met in the classroom. 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. (3.2, 3.3, 3.4)

The assessment process includes collecting and analyzing student performance data to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and implementing effective strategies and programs to improve achievement levels of all students. Data analysis is a critical component of the continuous improvement cycle. The PRIDE (Plan, Review, Implement, Determine Effectiveness, and Examine Results) cycle enables teachers and administrators to continuously use student assessment data to inform instructional practices and improve student achievement. (3.4, 3.6, 3.10)

Students in need of additional support are recommended for remediation opportunities (after school tutoring at all levels, FIRE remediation period at the high school level), coaching classes at the middle school level, extended learning time at the elementary level). Software programs are optimized during remediation periods to provide additional support for students in need of academic assistance. Students are identified using Response to Interventions universal screeners and monitored through ongoing formative assessments that are administered



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as part of the JMAP (Jefferson Measures of Academic Progress) assessment system. (3.3, 3.6, 3.10)

The school system continues to work on a systemic Response to Interventions (RTI) process. Professional development opportunities have been designed to address each of these areas. In the elementary grades, the RTI process has become very effective. Improvements have been made in the planning and implementation of the RTI process at the middle and high school levels. Ongoing teacher training and professional learning communities focusing on data analysis and differentiation of instruction are providing a structure for improving the RTI process in grades 6-12, as well as improving instruction to more effectively meet the diverse needs of all students. (3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.12)

System and school leaders allocate and protect instructional time to support student learning. Instructional time at each school and within each grade level exceeds state requirements. Those students who struggling with mastery of content and skills are provided intense remediation through the use of various software programs designed to diagnose and prescribe lessons based on academic deficiencies. Students who are performing above expectations are provided enrichment opportunities that focus on project-based learning. (3.12)

Additionally, system and school leaders work collaboratively to maintain articulation among and between schools to facilitate achievement for all students. Transition days are scheduled for students in grades 2, 5, and 8 to ensure a smooth transition from one school to the next. Parents attend orientation sessions to obtain information regarding procedures and processes involved in moving from one school to the next. The establishment of the Dragon PRIDE (Promoting Responsibility and Investing in Dragon Excellence) committee has provided a framework for various stakeholders working together to provide a seamless transition between schools. (3.1, 3.4, 3.8)

The Jefferson City School System sustains a system-wide climate that supports student learning and a continuous tradition of academic excellence. Strong community support enables administrators and teachers to provide quality education services that align curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (3.1, 3.5, 3.6)

Exposure to Excellence Promotes Excellence is a favorite motto among community members, system and school leaders, teachers, and other staff members. As students enter the doors of Jefferson City Schools, it is expected that all will graduate, and graduate on time. (3.1)

The annual community breakfast provides an opportunity to ensure all staff members are fully aware of the system's expectations for student learning. The Board of Education chairperson presents an overview of the academics, athletics, and arts programs along with highlights and accomplishments relative to student achievement results. Motivational speakers are invited to set the stage for the upcoming year and to reiterate the importance of working collaboratively to provide the best possible education for all students. It is clear that all stakeholders share common expectations for high academic achievement. (3.1)

As mentioned previously, the mission of Jefferson City Schools is to graduate fully functioning adults by providing a quality education program designed to assist students in becoming responsible, productive citizens who are able to adapt to the ever-changing global society. The staff at JCS assists students, parents, community members, and other stakeholders in accessing, analyzing, and preparing information in order to promote critical thinking and problem solving. The goal is to provide the teachers and students with the most innovative instructional materials, equipment, sustained support, and training necessary to develop global awareness and the necessary skills to compete in the world marketplace. The instructional technology staff at Jefferson City Schools and other experts facilitate technology related opportunities to improve student achievement and productivity.

The Jefferson City School System Board of Education has made a considerable investment in technology for its students and staff. Recently, the Board made the decision to move forward with a 1:1 initiative as part of the strategic planning process to address the need for more personalized learning opportunities for students. It is important that all students and teachers have access to and use technology as a tool for learning, communication, and collaboration. (3.3, 3.4, 3.5)

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The Jefferson City School System Board of Education has supported the establishment of the new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Center in order to provide extra tools and resources for students and teachers so they will have more opportunities to engage, explore, extend, explain, and evaluate lessons as well as their own creative ideas. STEAM is aligned with state standards and is designed to utilize cross-curricular and inter-disciplinary connections in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics to encourage innovation and the transfer of knowledge. It is driven by exploratory learning that requires students to actively engage in real world problem solving or inventing.

Access, training, and support are vital to the successful integration of instructional technology. Hence, the vision of technology use for Jefferson City Schools includes all three components. This systematic approach to technology implementation enables students to incorporate the use of text materials, software, and online resources when completing classroom assignments. The integration of technology equips students with knowledge and skills necessary to make effective decision regarding the completion of an assignment or mastery of a particular standard (3.1, 3.3)

Teachers participate in ongoing professional development so they can immediately introduce emerging technologies into the classroom. Administrators utilize web-based software to organize, disaggregate, and analyze student information so data-driven decisions can be made regarding student performance. Technology is used to provide stimulating and authentic learning that is connected to the real world. The Jefferson City School System believes that the proficient use of technology supports the development of lifelong learning skills, including flexibility, critical thinking, collaboration, self-reliance, and problem solving. In order to become successful, fully functioning adults in the 21st century, all students need to acquire and apply a wide variety of technological skills.

All teachers and administrators are committed to providing increased opportunities for students to develop technology literacy skills as they progress through school by integrating technology into instructional lessons and activities. JCS is committed to using technology as a tool to increase student achievement and to prepare all students to be globally competitive, fully-functioning adults as they exit Jefferson City Schools.

Actions to Sustain Areas of Strength:

The system's leadership will continue to support a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation for diversity. Efforts have been made to channel more resources and time to moving students from "proficient" to "distinguished" learners on state-mandated assessments. To continue making progress in this area, administrators and teachers will expand opportunities for students to engage in more project-based learning. Emphasis will continue to be placed on the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning.

System and school leaders will continue to promote and support the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities by providing quality professional development that facilitates achievement for all students, including differentiated instruction, rigor, relevance, and relationships, meeting the diverse needs of learners based on various learning styles, and effective use of instructional technology to customize student learning through the use of instructional strategies. (3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

Additional training will be provided in the areas of data teams and Response to Interventions to ensure that teachers are active participants in gathering and analyzing data in order to effectively monitor the academic and behavioral progress of all students.

System leaders will continue to work with school leaders and teachers to ensure a process is in place for horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. More professional learning opportunities will be provided to ensure a seamless transition from one grade level to the next and from one school to the next.

System and school leaders will continue to analyze student achievement and other performance data to determine program needs and progress toward goals and objectives outlined in the system strategic and school improvement plans.

### Areas in Need of Improvement:

The Jefferson City School System has a process in place to ensure all staff members are well-prepared to support and implement the system's expectations for student learning. (3.6) Teachers who are new to Jefferson City Schools participate in an orientation training session prior to pre-planning where the vision, mission, and goals of the system are shared. Information about the teacher evaluation system, overview of the instructional program, and academic achievement results are presented at a system-level training session. Teachers attend additional sessions at the school level to learn various procedures and operations.

Survey results indicate the need to provide more opportunities for new teachers and leaders to participate in mentoring, coaching, and induction programs that support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning. The new employee orientation session will continue to be offered prior to pre-planning; however, system and school leaders will devise a plan for ensuring that all new employees are paired with a mentor who will provide ongoing support throughout the school year. (3.7)

One of the areas rated as a low level of satisfaction among certain stakeholder groups is in the area of engaging families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeping them informed of their learning progress. Although the school system strives to communicate effectively with parents, problems with data access can provide significant barriers to communication. Various forms of communication are used to provide information to parents regarding their children's academic progress; however, more opportunities to provide face-to-face sessions are needed in order to ensure parents are equipped with knowledge and skills necessary to support student learning at home. System and school leaders will determine more effective ways to address this area of need, including offering more training sessions for parents and providing other means of communication. (3.8)

The Jefferson City School System has increased its student enrollment by approximately 144% since 2001. Each of the schools has implemented some type of teachers as advisors program, called PRIDE, to ensure that each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience. Survey results indicate that this is an area for improvement. As the system continues to grow, it is important that system and school leaders continue to determine ways to ensure that all students have at least one adult advocate who will provide support on an ongoing basis. (3.9)

System and school leaders assess teachers' ability to differentiate instruction based on the diverse needs of their students and provide continued professional learning in this area. Survey results indicate that teachers desire to have ongoing professional learning in this area and need support in ensuring academic growth of all students. In addition, survey results indicate that specific subgroups of students are not making adequate progress toward instructional goals. (3.12)

Based on the self-assessment and survey results, the school system will continue to revise instructional units and strengthen vertical alignment in all content areas. The system and its schools will continue to partner with the Georgia Center for Assessment to ensure a rigorous formative assessment system is in place and aligned to state content standards. (3.2)

More opportunities need to be provided for teachers to engage in meaningful conversations about curriculum, instruction, and assessment. School systems across the state have experienced quite a bit of change in terms of curriculum and assessment with a change in standards and a new assessment landscape. It is important that teachers continue to devise ways to ensure continuity across grade levels and within departments to ensure that students are provided with challenging, equitable learning opportunities. System and school leaders have begun

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working with teachers to evaluate existing formative and summative assessment measures to determine effectiveness in mastery of standards and academic growth.

The JMAP (Jefferson Measures of Academic Progress) process is underway; however, the process needs to be refined to ensure that all grade levels and content areas have common assessments, common grading practices and common language in terms of interpretation of standards is in place. While there has been improvement in this particular area, this practice does not exist across all grade levels and content areas. More emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills across grade levels and courses. (3.10)

Plans to Improve Areas in Need of Improvement:

In the annual needs assessment completed in spring 2016, teachers expressed a need for more strategies effective in addressing the instructional needs of students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, minority, and gifted students as well as providing increased access to technology to increase student performance.

As the school system moves toward a 1:1 technology initiative, system leaders will work with outside consultants to provide training to school leaders, teachers, and other staff members on technology integration to improve teaching and learning. Additional training on the use of Google Classroom will enable teachers to provide more access to digital content, making learning available anytime, anywhere.

Formative and summative assessment data will continue to be carefully monitored throughout the year to determine teacher effectiveness in ensuring that all students are progressing. Standard progress monitoring tools and common assessments will be used to provide data for analyzing student growth. Teacher ability to differentiate instruction for diverse learners will be analyzed through individual student progress, and professional learning will be provided based on teacher needs. (3.12)

## 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.

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Policies, processes, and procedures ensure that system and school leaders have access to, hire, place, and retain qualified professional support staff. System and school leaders systematically determine the number of personnel necessary to fill all the roles and responsibilities necessary to support purposes, educational programs, and continuous improvement throughout the district. Sustained fiscal resources are available to fund positions critical to achieve the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District budgets or financial plans for the last three years</li> <li>•Assessments of staffing needs</li> <li>•Documentation of highly qualified staff</li> <li>•Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools</li> <li>•BOE Retreat Documents, Administrators' Meeting Agendas and Sign-In Sheets</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are focused on supporting the purpose and direction of the system, its schools, educational programs, and system operations. Instructional time is protected in policy and practice. System and school leaders work to secure material and fiscal resources to meet the needs of all students and improve the effectiveness of the system. System and school leaders demonstrate that instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are allocated so that all students have equitable opportunities to attain challenging learning expectations. Efforts toward the continuous improvement of instruction and operations include achieving the purpose and direction of the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of school schedules</li> <li>•Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources</li> <li>•Examples of school calendars</li> <li>•Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction</li> <li>•Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction</li> <li>•District strategic plan showing resources support for district</li> <li>•Financial Efficiency Rating Information, BOE Retreat Documents</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	System and school leaders have adopted or created clear expectations for maintaining safety, cleanliness, and a healthy environment, and have shared these definitions and expectations with stakeholders. System and school personnel as well as students are accountable for maintaining these expectations. Measures are in place that allow for continuous tracking of these conditions. Improvement plans are developed and implemented by appropriate personnel as necessary to improve these conditions. Results of improvement efforts are evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Example systems for school maintenance requests</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements</li> <li>•Example school records of depreciation of equipment</li> <li>•5-Year Facilities Plan, JCS Emergency Procedures Manual, Climate Star Ratings</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	The system has policies and procedures for strategic resource management. The system employs a long-range strategic planning process in the areas of budget, facilities, and other strategic system components. The strategic planning process is evaluated for effectiveness, and improvement plans related to the process are developed and implemented when necessary. Strategic plans are implemented with fidelity by the governing body, and system leaders and have built-in measures used to monitor implementation and completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems</li> <li>•Evaluation results of the effectiveness of the district strategic plan or indicators of changes resulting in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategic plan</li> <li>•JCS BOE Retreat Documents</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to ensure that all students, school, and system personnel have access to the media and information resources necessary to achieve the educational programs of the system and its schools. The system implements and evaluates processes to ensure qualified personnel are recruited, hired, and retained in sufficient numbers to assist students, school and system personnel in learning about the tools and locations for finding and retrieving information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Data on media and information resources available to students and staff</li> <li>•Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information</li> <li>•STEAM Center Brochure</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	The system provides a modern, fully functional technology infrastructure, modern, updated equipment, and a qualified technical support staff to meet the teaching, learning, and operational needs of all stakeholders throughout the system. System and school personnel collect data concerning needs and use the resulting data to develop and implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, infrastructure, and equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model</li> <li>•District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level</li> <li>•Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness</li> <li>•Examples of school-level technology plans and budgets to improve technology services and infrastructure to students and staff</li> <li>•JCS BOE Retreat Documents</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the physical, social, and emotional needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Student assessment system for identifying student needs</li> <li>•Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support</li> <li>•Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills</li> <li>•Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education</li> <li>•List of support services available to students</li> <li>•PRIDE Lessons</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Description of IEP process</li><li>•Description of referral process</li><li>•Response to Intervention Handbook</li></ul>	Level 3

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

Areas of Strength:

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 school system, individual schools, and educational programs. One of the Jefferson City School System's Board of Education goals is to have highly qualified personnel for all students. The school system has maintained 100% highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals for the last several years. System and school leaders believe that all students should have an equitable opportunity to receive quality instruction. The system is committed to ensuring that the needs of all students are effectively identified and addressed. (4.1)

Jefferson City Schools partner with local universities and colleges to place student teachers in classrooms throughout the system. This partnership allows the system to recruit qualified applicants by providing an opportunity for future teachers to become familiar with the operations of the school and system, and it allows school leaders to observe the potential candidates interacting with teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders. Several student teachers have been hired for teaching positions as a result of their performance during practicum and student teaching assignments.

Job vacancies are posted on state and local websites. In addition, system and school leaders attend area job recruitment fairs hosted by local universities when necessary. All teachers and paraprofessionals must meet the certification requirements to be considered high qualified and all new employees must complete and pass background checks prior to employment.

The school system has had a successful track record for employing highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. All staff members have the opportunity to maintain their certification status by participating in quality, job-embedded professional learning. Principals carefully analyze Response to Interventions progress monitoring and other student performance data to determine individual placement decisions of students and teachers. The school system proudly commits to providing educational opportunities that are tailored to individual student needs. Teacher equity data is used in making placement decisions. As part of the annual needs assessment and data analysis process, system and school leaders review teacher experience data to ensure equal access to experienced and effective teachers for all students. (4.4, 4.5)

The Board of Education members and system and school leaders participate in two board retreats each year to review program results and to identify class size equity needs in the system. Each year, a growth projection is mapped out to determine where the staffing needs might



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be in each school. The Jefferson City School System works with the city planning office to determine where the growth will take place in the community. There is a plan to ensure continued equity in class sizes and teacher effectiveness for all students. (4.1, 4.4)

Jefferson City Schools has a systematic process for identifying professional development needs. The professional development plan and timeline match the learning needs of students and the instructional needs of teachers. An annual survey is distributed to all staff members to determine professional learning needs. Student achievement results are utilized in developing school-level professional learning plans that are aligned to school improvement goals. School administrators and teachers work collaboratively to identify professional learning needs and resources needed to improve instruction and student performance. (4.2)

The school system supports the ongoing growth and development of staff members, as outlined in the vision and performance goals, by providing regularly scheduled onsite opportunities for training, release time during the school year, stipends during off-contract time, and allocation of funds from local, state, and federal programs to support system and school initiatives. Professional learning plans include an emphasis on teacher collaboration. Collaborative planning sessions are scheduled at the school level to enable grade level and/or content area teachers to review and revise curriculum maps, analyze student performance data, and develop instructional plans designed to improve student achievement. (4.2, 4.4)

The process of continuous improvement and annual review of program effectiveness ensures maximum resources are generated and allocated in an efficient and effective manner and lead to improved student performance. The budget process is closely aligned to the system vision, mission, values, and beliefs. As outlined in the Jefferson City School System Performance Goals, the board members and system and school leaders are committed to generating and managing resources that support a quality instructional program. (4.2, 4.4, 4.5)

The Jefferson City School System has developed a great sense of pride in offering quality educational programs and experiences to all students. A commitment to excellence and willingness to invest in personnel and programs needed to be a high performing system provides an attraction for employment and increased teacher retention rate. System and school leaders allocate and protect instructional time to support student learning. Instructional time at each school and within each grade level exceeds state requirements. (4.2, 4.4)

Careful and sustained fiscal management is aligned with the continuous improvement process. Consequently, human, financial, technological, physical, and material resources are allocated and distributed to support improved academic outcomes. Jefferson City Schools utilize and manage resources in an efficient and effective manner. (4.2)

The Board of Education and system leadership are committed to employing principles of sound financial management through careful budgetary analysis, strategic resource management, and long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system. The school system has maintained fiscal discipline and stewardship in light of recent economic decline through income generated by a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), federal, state, and local funds. The system currently has a \$3.7 million general fund balance, \$25.4 million general fund budget, \$30.4 million total budget, and a 15.609 millage rate. The Financial Efficiency Star Rating is 4.5 out of 5 stars, as measured by the College and Career Ready Performance Indicators (CCRPI) (4.2, 4.3, 4.4)

Budget reports and financial updates are presented at the annual community breakfast and Leadership Jackson session as part of the process for ensuring appropriate communication with stakeholders and accountability among system leaders with regards to the allocation and alignment to the school system's vision, programs, services, and plans for continuous improvement.

The Jefferson City School System believes that part of creating "fully functioning adults" is to support the academic, physical, emotional, and social development of individual students. The school system works to ensure, support, and monitor the provision of resource and support services that meet the needs of students. Multiple resources and services are used to ensure all students receive a quality education. (4.7)

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The school system maintains a five-year facilities plan under the direction and guidance of the Georgia Department of Education Facilities Division to ensure the records regarding facilities and site improvements are accurate, current, and meet eligibility requirements for state funding. The superintendent oversees the construction of new facilities, additions to existing facilities, modifications to sites and buildings and acquisition of new sites for construction purposes. To ensure compliance with applicable state standards and regulations, all construction projects are submitted to the Georgia Department of Education Facilities Division.

Local and state authorities regularly inspect existing facilities, sites, and equipment, including inspections related to fire safety, health, food service, and transportation. New construction and modifications to existing sites and buildings are planned and designed by professional architects and engineers and approved by the Board of Education. Designers are required to meet all applicable building codes and submit all project plans and specifications to appropriate governing authorities. (4.3, 4.4)

Projects completed within the last five years and proposed projects for the future confirm the effectiveness of the system's facility planning and organization. The Board of Education has approved projects to significantly improve and expand existing facilities and the construction of new buildings, which supports the goal of maintaining and upgrading facilities to meet the challenging instructional needs of students and staff and accommodate current and anticipated growth.

The system operates four schools and a central office. The state of the art facilities reflects the emphasis the Board of Education and system's leadership places on providing a challenging, rigorous curriculum in a safe and orderly environment. The Board of Education and system and school leaders acknowledge that a safe, orderly environment is essential to providing quality educational services to students in order to help them become fully functioning adults.

The system has a plan in place to inspect each facility on a regular basis to ensure safety and compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. Practice emergency drills are performed regularly to ensure safety of staff members and students. Emergency procedures are regularly reviewed and revised with the assistance of local and state law enforcement agencies. Survey results indicate a strong level of satisfaction among stakeholders in terms of commitment to providing a safe and orderly learning environment for students. (4.3)

The Board of Education is committed to providing faculty, staff, and students with exceptional facilities and access to technology to remain competitive in today's rapidly changing educational environment. Instructional, administrative, and parent/community uses of technology are designed to support improve student achievement. The Board of Education has made a considerable investment in technology for its students and staff through an upgraded infrastructure to support the Bring Your Own Technology initiative, which is also effective enough to support the 1:1 technology initiative to be implemented over the next two or three years, and the establishment of the STEAM Center. (4.6)

The goal of technology implementation is for teachers to have expanded opportunities to use computers, visual presenters, projectors, and other technology equipment to enhance the delivery of instructional lessons. The use of technology supports differentiation of instruction by allowing students to complete assignments using a variety of methods. Additionally, the use of technology provides students the opportunities to collaboratively produce high quality work that can be shared with a worldwide community of learners via the internet. Instructional content for some high school students is delivered through a virtual, online format. (4.6)

The foundation for support services in Jefferson City Schools is based on strong school to community relationships and a commitment to continuous school improvement. The philosophical framework for student support services is based on the system's mission, vision, and core beliefs. The Jefferson City School System employs qualified professionals who are trained to work with faculty, staff, and students and their families to ensure emotional, social, cultural, and health needs are addressed in support of increased student achievement. (4.5, 4.7, 4.8)

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School counselors work in collaboration with other staff members to implement a comprehensive guidance program in all schools. Counseling services include but are not limited to delivering instructional lessons through classroom guidance, supporting students and parents with academic and career planning and guidance, and facilitating small group sessions based on identified student needs. Counselors work collaboratively with administrators and teachers to provide resources and materials used in creating successful learning environments. (4.7, 4.8)

### Actions to Sustain Areas of Strength:

The Jefferson City School System continues to experience rapid growth in student enrollment and recognizes the challenges of future growth and providing services with limited fiscal resources. In order to continue to support the purpose and direction of the school system, the Board of Education and system and school leaders will continue the practice of ensuring that funding is focused on instruction in order to meet the needs of all students. The school system will continue to implement a process to ensure that funds are spent only on those products and services with proven results.

Emphasis will be placed on horizontal and vertical alignment to ensure that practices and procedures provide continuity and a seamless transition from one grade level to the next and from one school to the next and lead to improve student performance.

Instructional time will continue to be maximized to ensure students' academic needs are being addressed. System and school leaders will continue to monitor the overall programs and determine ways to improve the effectiveness of educational programs and system operations.

The school system will continue to promote safety and providing state of the art facilities to ensure students are provided with the best educational opportunities possible.

### Areas in Need of Improvement:

System and school leaders engage in short- and long-range planning and evaluation of teaching and learning, budgetary analysis, facilities, and technology; however, not as much emphasis has been placed on support services in terms of addressing social and emotional needs of students. As the student enrollment continues to increase, there may be a need for additional support staff to provide support in meeting the diverse academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students.

The Board of Education is in the process of implementing a 1:1 technology initiative and examining the possibility of installing security cameras and audio enhancement equipment in every classroom. The security cameras would be installed to promote safety among teachers and students. The audio enhancement equipment would be used as a tool for teacher growth and development.

### Plans to Improve Areas in Need of Improvement:

The school system will conduct a comprehensive review of counseling and other support services to determine if the system is effectively meeting the diverse needs of students. Information will be presented at an upcoming Board of Education Retreat.

System leaders will continue to obtain feedback from various stakeholder groups regarding the 1:1 technology initiative, security cameras in the classroom, and audio enhancement equipment to determine alignment with goals and objectives outlined in the system strategic and school improvement plans.

## 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.

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	System and school personnel maintain and use a comprehensive assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures. These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system (including non-instructional divisions) performance. The comprehensive assessment system ensures consistent measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions. Most assessments are proven reliable and bias free. The comprehensive assessment system is regularly evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model</li> <li>•Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols</li> <li>•Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local or school assessments on student learning and school performance</li> <li>•Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness</li> </ul>	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning from multiple data sources are documented and used consistently by professional and support staff throughout the district. Data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. System and school personnel use data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning</li> <li>•List of data sources related to district effectiveness</li> <li>•Written protocols and procedures for data collection and analysis</li> <li>•Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning</li> <li>•List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning</li> <li>•Data Teams Diagram, Meeting Agendas and Sign-In Sheets, BOE Retreat Documents, JCS PRIDE Cycle</li> </ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	All professional and support staff members are assessed and trained in a rigorous professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data</li> <li>•Documentation of attendance and training related to data use</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data</li> </ul>	Level 3

# Accreditation Report

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Policies and procedures describe a process for analyzing data that determine verifiable improvement in student learning including readiness for and success at the next level. Results indicate improvement, and system and school personnel systematically use these results to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement action plans related to student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Student surveys</li><li>•Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data</li><li>•Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans</li><li>•Evidence of student readiness for the next level</li><li>•Evidence of student growth</li><li>•Evidence of student success at the next level</li><li>•JCS BOE Retreat Documents</li></ul>	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	System and school leaders monitor comprehensive information about student learning, system and school effectiveness, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals. Leaders regularly communicate results using multiple delivery methods and to all stakeholder groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals</li><li>•Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement</li><li>•Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups</li></ul>	Level 3

**Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.**

Areas of Strength:

The Jefferson City School System uses a systematic and comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures to ensure the achievement of required standards by individual students, subgroups, and the overall learning organization.

Teachers at all grade levels use common assessments and other formative measures to determine the success of students in meeting the state's academic achievement standards. (5.1)

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System and school leaders have worked collaboratively to develop the JMAP assessment system in order to comply with state requirements for monitoring academic growth of students. JMAP (Jefferson Measures of Academic Progress) is a strategic assessment and data teams plan that provides the framework for common assessments aligned to content standards and includes standardized state-mandated assessments, supplemental assessments obtained from external vendors, and locally developed assessments that produce a wide range of data reflective of student learning. The assessment system is aligned to the system's expectations for continual improvement in student achievement and yields information that is reliable, valid, and non-biased.

Assessment results are used to assist teachers in determining the success of teaching and learning in the classroom and to identify and monitor students for enrichment and remediation opportunities. Multiple measures of student performance are used in diagnosing skill deficits and gaps and to determine trends in student learning and instruction. Research based interventions are used to address the diverse needs of students and to close skill gaps. (5.2, 5.4)

In addition, results from state mandated and locally developed assessments are used to develop target lists that are used in grade level, department, and Response to Interventions meetings throughout the year to monitor student progress toward learning goals. Locally developed common assessments are reviewed and revised annually to ensure they are accurate predictors of student success. Performance data from these assessments are analyzed quarterly to determine instructional effectiveness and to monitor student progress. (5.1, 5.2, 5.4)

Disaggregated data are used by grade levels and departments to conduct self-evaluations of their successes and areas needing improvement. Professional learning needs are identified based on student achievement data. All system professional learning activities are linked directly to student performance goals. All teachers have been provided training on the use and interpretation of data to inform teaching practices. (5.3)

The PRIDE School Improvement Cycle ensures that teachers and administrators engage in the continuous process of collecting student achievement data, analyzing the results, and adjusting teaching and learning to guide changes in student performance. Instructional services staff conduct a summer leadership retreat in which system and school leaders work collaboratively to disaggregate student achievement data by subgroup and domain level to determine instructional and curricular areas for improvement and to identify trends in student performance and root causes and barriers to improving performance. This process is replicated at the school level at the beginning of each school year. As part of the school improvement process, teachers meet regularly by grade level and/or content area to disaggregate all student data by subgroup and domain areas. (5.2)

Data collected from state and locally administered assessments are used to guide the development of the system and school improvement plans. The Jefferson City School System's assessment system provides a balanced approach to monitoring student performance and improvement toward learning goals and objectives outlined in the system and school improvement plans.

Student assessment results can only be used in informing teaching and learning if communicated to appropriate stakeholders in a timely and relevant manner. JCS provides a system of communication, which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system and school effectiveness. (5.5)

Diagnostic assessments play a large role in the Response to Interventions (RTI) process. Progress monitoring data is shared on an ongoing basis with parents of students who are involved in the RTI process. School leaders and teachers work collectively with students and their parents to interpret assessment results and prescribe specific remediation and acceleration opportunities designed to effectively meet the needs of students. Analyzing diagnostic assessment results allows school leaders and teachers to determine student placement in various academic learning programs (e.g., Early Intervention, Title I, remedial programs, special education, and gifted education). (5.2, 5.4)

Performance data are shared with stakeholder groups during the annual Community Breakfast and through presentations presented at local

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community organization meetings and events. The board members work with system and school leaders to review program results and achievement data at annual board retreats. Most recent student performance data are presented to board members and areas of concern are highlighted and discussed as part of the school improvement process. The superintendent facilitates quarterly meetings with system and school leaders to review student performance and other data and to determine progress toward goals outlined in the system strategic and a school improvement plan, which ensures all necessary resources are in place to aid the performance of all students. (5.4, 5.5)

### Actions to Sustain Areas of Strength:

The goal of administrators and teachers collaboratively using data to improve teaching and learning is to establish an understanding of student achievement data through the analysis of grade level, school, content, and domain performance results and to identify overall system and school strengths and weaknesses to guide an effective school improvement plan by employing the following strategies: K-12 vertical alignment and understanding of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; effective use of school level data as an ongoing monitoring and improvement tool; and effective use of classroom level data for teachers to understand how it should be used to guide program decisions and the use of daily instructional strategies and practices.

Student assessment data will continue to be used to make decisions for continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Results from diagnostic assessments and locally developed formative assessments will be used to determine levels of student proficiency and mastery of skills needed to be successful at the next level, evaluate instructional effectiveness, and identify interventions for addressing the academic needs of individual students. (5.4)

The Jefferson City School System will continue to evaluate the current assessment system to determine its effectiveness in providing the information needed to improve teaching and learning. Necessary adjustments will be made to ensure alignment with school improvement initiatives. (5.1)

### Areas in Need of Improvement:

With the new implementation of state standards, it is important that we continuously review and revise common assessments to ensure alignment with standards. Across the school system, there are gaps in terms of common assessments being developed and implemented consistently. System and school leaders have been working with grade levels and departments to ensure the JMAP system is being implemented; however, additional work is needed in some areas to ensure common assessments are aligned to state standards, instruction matches what is being assessed, and grade levels and content areas are using rigorous, common measures to determine mastery of content.

In addition, more professional learning is needed on the use of data teams to drive instruction. While teachers engage in the data teams process, more work needs to be done to equip teachers with knowledge and skills needed to drill data down at the classroom level.

System and school leaders need to work collaboratively to develop more clearly defined policies and procedures for analyzing data and determining verifiable improvement in student learning and instructional program effectiveness.

### Plans to Improve Areas in Need of Improvement:

The Jefferson City School System will continue to work with the Georgia Center for Assessment to provide ongoing professional learning to leaders and teachers on the effective use of data to drive instruction, development of rigorous common assessments aligned to content standards, and determining learning targets and mastery of content standards. Common assessments will continue to be developed and/or



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revised to allow for more consistent measures of curriculum across classrooms and courses at all schools within the school system.

# **Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic**

## **Introduction**

The Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic is designed to analyze the institution's survey results in terms of areas of achievement and areas that need improvement. Further, the diagnostic is essential to the accreditation and continuous improvement processes in that it provides the institution with a comprehensive view of the aggregate scores of the surveys administered, and the actual total of respondents for each survey type to derive a single score for this diagnostic. The performance level score computed at the completion of the diagnostic is used to broaden and enhance the external review team's understanding of the stakeholder's perceptions of the institution; the diagnostic should be used in the same manner by the institution as it engages in improvement planning.

**Stakeholder Feedback Data**

<b>Label</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Attachment</b>
1.	Did you complete the Stakeholder Feedback Data document offline and upload below?	Yes	JCS Stakeholder Feedback Data Document 2016-2017 - see attached	JCS Stakeholder Feedback Data Document 2016-2017

## Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.5

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
1.	Questionnaire Administration	All required AdvancED questionnaires were used by the institution to receive stakeholder feedback. The minimum response rate for each population was met (parent questionnaire: equal to or greater than 20%, student questionnaire(s): equal to or greater than 40%, staff questionnaire: equal to or greater than 60%). Questionnaires were administered with complete fidelity to the appropriate administrative procedures. In every instance, the stakeholders to whom these questionnaires were administered fully represented the populations served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations were provided as necessary for all participants.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
2.	Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	All questionnaires had an average item value of 3.20 or above (on a 5.0 scale). Results of stakeholder feedback collected by the institution were acceptably analyzed and presented with reasonable clarity.	Level 3

## **Areas of Notable Achievement**

### **Which area(s) indicate the overall highest level of satisfaction or approval?**

The Jefferson City School System is committed to ensuring that stakeholders are actively involved in providing quality educational services to all students. Feedback is valuable in the continuous school improvement process. System and school leaders seek to partner with all stakeholders to build a strong educational program for our students.

The AdvancED Stakeholder Feedback Surveys were administered to staff members, parents, and students and required completion rates were met for all three groups of stakeholders. Based on the analyzed results of the surveys, the following areas indicate the highest level of satisfaction:

Parents - Top Five Indicators - 2.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4

Staff - Top Five Indicators - 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.4, and 4.1

Students - Top Five Indicators - 1.1,3.2, 3.4, 4.4, and 5.4

Both staff members and students rated Standards 1 and 2 the two highest areas of satisfaction, and parents rated Standards 4 and 5 as the highest areas of satisfaction.

Overall, survey results show that there is a strong sense of purpose and direction among all groups of stakeholders. Staff, parents, and students acknowledge there is a commitment to high expectations for learning and shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning, which is also evident in student achievement results.

Parents and staff rated 2.4 as one of the highest levels of satisfaction and recognize that leadership and staff at all levels of the organization foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction. In addition, both stakeholder groups identified Indicator 4.1 as a high area of satisfaction. The school system has maintained 100% Highly Qualified Status based on federal guidelines for the last several years. It is a strong belief that effective teaching leads to high levels of student performance.

All stakeholder groups believe 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.

There is a strong sense of satisfaction among parents and students in terms of the school system's efforts in managing resources to support long-range planning that aligns to the purpose and direction of the school system. The belief that "Exposure to Excellence Promotes Excellence" is prevalent among all stakeholder groups. The Board of Education and system and school leaders are continuously striving to improve practices, operations, and procedures to ensure the academic, social, and behavioral needs of all students are met.

Although the school system ranks in the top 4 state-wide based on student achievement and other college and career ready performance indicators, we recognize there is always room for improvement.

### **Which area(s) show a trend toward increasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval?**

Fall 2016 is the first and only time the school system has administered the AdvancED surveys; therefore, it is difficult to accurately determine any trends toward increasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval. The school system has administered other stakeholders surveys in the past. Title II-A Needs Assessment Surveys have been the most consistent measure of gauging stakeholder satisfaction over time.

In looking at the results of the needs assessment surveys as compared to the AdvancED surveys, it appears that there is a trend toward higher levels of satisfaction among stakeholders in the following areas:

1. Providing students with a well-rounded education, including access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience
2. Supporting equitable access to effective school teachers and leaders for all students including low-income and minority students
3. Promoting a positive learning and work environment
4. Offering a clean and safe school environment

The AdvancED surveys have provided such valuable information that can be used to improve practices, programs, and processes. The school system plans to administer these particular surveys annually in order to more effectively collect and analyze trends in stakeholder feedback. Results will be shared at the Board of Education Retreats and will be used as part of the strategic planning process (both short- and long-term).

### **Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other stakeholder feedback sources?**

Previous surveys, including the Title II-A Needs Assessment Surveys, Surveys of Instructional Practice (teacher and leader surveys conducted as part of the Teacher (TKES) and Leader (LKES) Keys Effectiveness System, and school climate surveys provided by the Georgia Department of Education as part of the College and Career Ready Performance Indicators (CCRPI) process, show some consistent findings with results from the AdvancED surveys.

All surveys indicate there is a strong level of satisfaction among stakeholders in terms of equitable learning opportunities for students. There is a shared sense of commitment toward high expectations for learning. Employing highly qualified staff members is a top priority among stakeholders.

In addition, results from multiple surveys show that parents, staff members, and students feel that a safe and welcoming learning environment exists in Jefferson City Schools, as indicated by School Climate Ratings (CCRPI) - JES receiving 5 out of 5 Stars and JA, JMS, and JHS receiving 4 out of 5 Stars.

## Areas in Need of Improvement

### Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest level of satisfaction or approval?

Based on the analyzed results of the surveys, the following areas indicate the lowest level of satisfaction:

Parents - Lowest Five Indicators - 2.3, 3.8, 3.9, 3.12, 4.2

Staff - Lowest Five Indicators - 3.5, 3.7, 3.9, 4.5, 4.6

Students - Lowest Five Indicators - 1.2, 3.8, 3.12, 4.3, 5.1

Both staff members and students rated Standard 4 as the lowest level of satisfaction, and parents rated Standard 3 as the lowest level of satisfaction.

Parents and students rated Indicators 3.8 and 3.12 as two of the areas of low satisfaction. The rating from parents for Indicator 3.8 is 3.99, and for students, the rating is 3.97. For this particular indicator, the ratings for middle and high school seem to be lower than those among elementary level respondents. Parent involvement at the elementary school level is high; however, as students transition to middle and high school, it becomes more challenging to maintain the level of parental involvement. The school system is exploring more options to engage families in more meaningful ways and keep them informed of their children's learning progress. Weekly communication is provided to all families through emails, newsletters, etc.; however, system and school leaders recognize the importance of providing more face-to-face interaction to ensure parents are equipped with skills and knowledge to help support learning at home.

The rating for Indicator 3.12 is 3.96 for parents and 3.99 for students. Support services are provided to students who need extra academic assistance through the remedial, early intervention, credit recovery and repair, Title I, and special education programs. Gifted program services are provided for students who need enrichment and acceleration opportunities. The school system is exploring options for providing additional support services based on unique learning needs of students through a more personalized approach.

Both parents and staff members rated Indicator 3.9 as an area of low satisfaction. The Jefferson City School System is growing rapidly, and there is a strong desire to maintain a "small school system" mentality in terms of adults knowing students and their needs. Our school system is fortunate to have such a strong, supportive community, and teachers and school leaders know students individually, which makes a difference in terms of student success. While we have implemented a PRIDE (teachers as advisors) program, it is important as student enrollment continues to increase that we find alternate ways to ensure students are connected to an adult advocate who provides ongoing support to ensure a positive educational experience.

Among staff members, there is a concern with resources and support systems needed to effectively meet the diverse needs of students. The Jefferson City School System has experienced approximately 144% increase in student enrollment since 2001. As a result of the growth, the needs of students have become much more varied and unique. More support is needed to address not only the academic but behavioral and social needs of students.



### **Which area(s) show a trend toward decreasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval?**

Fall 2016 is the first and only time the school system has administered the AdvancED surveys; therefore, it is difficult to accurately determine any trends toward decreasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval. The school system has administered other stakeholders surveys in the past. Title II-A Needs Assessment Surveys have been the most consistent measure of gauging stakeholder satisfaction over time.

Results from the spring 2016 administration of the Title II-A Needs Assessment Surveys shows that there is more concern with accommodating the needs of all learners. Staff members have requested more support on providing differentiated learning opportunities, and professional learning is needed to equip teachers with knowledge and skills for ensuring the academic growth of all students.

Overall, all stakeholder groups tend to be satisfied with the performance of the Jefferson City School System; however, there is room for improvement. It is important that we continuously examine current practices to determine effectiveness and address any areas of concern. As the student enrollment continues to increase and the needs of students become more diverse, system and school leaders will continue to work with stakeholder groups to ensure that any trends toward decreasing stakeholder satisfaction are addressed with appropriate strategies and action steps.

Administering the AdvancED surveys annually will allow the system and school leaders to more effectively identify trends toward decreasing stakeholder satisfaction by providing a more consistent measure to monitor system operations and practices.

### **What are the implications for these stakeholder perceptions?**

Survey results have been used to adjust school improvement plans. Based on feedback from stakeholders, it is evident that our strategic planning process needs to include ways to ensure academic growth of all students, providing opportunities for teachers to engage in horizontal and vertical alignment conversations to ensure a seamless transition from one grade level to the next and one school to the next, determining resources needed to effectively address individual learning, social, and behavioral needs of students, and providing professional development focused on personalized instructional strategies and interventions.

Additionally, efforts must be made to include more ways to integrate technology into existing curricular and instructional programs in order to improve teaching and learning. There is a need for keeping students and parents better informed about student's progress. System and school leaders will continue to provide opportunities for grade levels and departments to collaboratively develop curriculum maps, instructional units, and common assessments that will lead to improved levels of student achievement.

### **Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other stakeholder feedback sources?**

Feedback gathered from the AdvancED surveys is consistent with findings from other stakeholder feedback sources. All survey and other feedback sources show there is a strong commitment to high expectations and providing quality educational experiences for all students. There is strong community support in the academics, athletics, arts, and extracurricular programs. Teachers are dedicated to ensuring the academic needs of students are being met in the classroom. Overall, our stakeholders are satisfied with the educational programs provided to students.

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However, there are needs that must be addressed if we are to continue to be ranked among the highest school systems in the state of Georgia. More opportunities for personalizing learning must continue to be a priority as our school system continues to grow. Meeting the diverse needs of students and ensuring academic growth of every learner is essential to meeting the goals and commitments aligned to the system's purpose and direction.

# **Student Performance Diagnostic**

## **Introduction**

The Student Performance Diagnostic provides an institution with a process to report summative student assessments. This diagnostic is significant to the accreditation and continuous improvement process as it serves as a resource for schools to view content area assessment results required by the state, district, or other entities, determine the quality and reliability of the given assessments, and show the alignment of the assessments to the school's curriculum. The performance level computed at the completion of the diagnostic is used by the external review team as a comprehensive report to understand fully the institution's assessment program; the diagnostic should be used in the same manner by the institution as it engages in improvement planning.

**Student Performance Data**

<b>Label</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Attachment</b>
1.	Did you complete the Student Performance Data document offline and upload below?	Yes	FY2017 JCS Student Performance Data Document - see attached	FY2017 JCS Student Performance Data Document

## Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.0

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
1.	Assessment Quality	The array of assessment devices used by the institution to determine students' performances is sufficiently aligned so that valid inferences can be reached regarding students' status with respect to the majority of those curricular aims regarded as high-priority instructional targets. The documentation provided in support of this alignment is relatively persuasive. Most of the assessments used are accompanied by evidence demonstrating that they satisfy accepted technical requirements.	Level 3

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
2.	Test Administration	All the assessments used by the institution to determine students' performances, whether externally acquired or internally developed, have been administered with complete fidelity to the administrative procedures appropriate for each assessment. In every instance, the students to whom these assessments were administered are accurately representative of the students served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations have been provided for all assessments so that valid inferences can be made about all students' status with respect to all of the institution's targeted curricular outcomes.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
3.	Quality of Learning	Evidence of student learning promoted by the institution is acceptably analyzed and presented with reasonable clarity. In comparison to institutions functioning in a similar educational context, students' status, improvement, and/or growth evidence indicates that the level of student learning is at or above what would otherwise be expected.	Level 3

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
4.	Equity of Learning	Evidence of student learning indicates achievement gaps exist among subpopulations of students, and these achievement gaps demonstrate a modest decline.	Level 2

## Areas of Notable Achievement

### Which area(s) are above the expected levels of performance?

The Jefferson City School System ranks in the top 4 state-wide based on student achievement and other college and career ready performance indicators. The overall 2016 CCRPI score for the district is 90.2, compared to a state average of 73.6. The overall CCRPI score for the school district is 3 points higher than in 2015 (87.2). The 2015 CCRPI score for the state of Georgia was 75.5.

The mission of Jefferson City Schools is to graduate fully functioning adults who are college and career ready and globally competitive in a 21st century environment. The school district's graduation rate consistently exceeds the state average. The graduation rate at Jefferson High School increased from 93.5% to 96.1% from 2015 to 2016, as compared to the state's graduation rate of 78.8% in 2015 and 79.2% in 2016. In addition, SAT and ACT scores consistently exceed state and national averages.

The 2014-2015 school year marked the first administration of the new Georgia Milestones Assessment System, designed to measure the proficiency of students in mastery of state content standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in grades 3-8 are required to take the Georgia Milestones as well as high school students who are enrolled in one of the eight required courses with an end of course assessment.

The new state assessments include constructed response items in language arts and mathematics, a writing component, and norm-referenced items to complement the criterion-referenced information and to provide a national comparison. Georgia Milestones is designed to provide students with critical information about their own achievement and their readiness for their next level of learning and serve as a key component of the state's accountability system - the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI).

The results of the new assessment system were predicted to be lower across the state as compared to the previous state-mandated assessments (CRCT - Criterion Referenced Competency Tests; EOCT - End of Course Tests). Student assessment results fall into one of four achievement levels: beginning, developing, proficient, and distinguished.

The scores for Jefferson City Schools were higher in all grade levels and content areas than state averages on the 2015 and 2016 Georgia Milestones End of Grade and End of Course assessments.

Areas Above the Expected Levels of Performance (system rankings in the top 10 statewide based on percentage of proficient and distinguished) are as follows:

#### End of Grade Assessments:

English Language Arts - Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8

Mathematics - Grade 3, Grade 5, Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8

Science - Grade 5, Grade 8

Social Studies - Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 7

#### End of Course Assessments:

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American Literature

Coordinate Algebra

Analytic Geometry

Biology

Economics

In looking at all data sources, student performance mathematics tends to be the highest across all content areas, followed by language arts.

Student performance data is regularly reviewed by teachers and administrators to determine program strengths and areas for improvement.

### **Describe the area(s) that show a positive trend in performance.**

In reviewing state and local assessment data, there is a positive trend in performance in the areas of language arts and mathematics.

While performance levels in 3rd grade language arts are not where we would like for them to be, there has been a considerable increase in performance over the last two years - 74% in 2015 to 79% in 2016. System and school leaders have worked with teachers in grades K-2 and grade 3 to implement more strategies for ensuring vertical alignment of curriculum. Common assessments have been revised to more clearly align to Georgia Milestones. A reading intervention program (iREAD) has been implemented in grades K-2 to address skill deficiencies in the area of reading and to ensure grade level proficiency by the time students enter 3rd grade. Ongoing meetings are scheduled for teachers to discuss curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure students are transitioning from grade 2 to grade 3 with the necessary skills to successfully master content standards and perform at proficient levels on the Georgia Milestones.

In addition, student performance in language arts has increased over the last two years in grades 5, 7, and 8. The percentage of students scoring in the distinguished learner category has increased from 2015 to 2016 in both 9th and 11th grade literature.

In the area of mathematics, the percentage of students in the top three performance levels increased from 2015 to 2016 in grades 4, 5, and 8. There was a significant increase in performance in grade 8 mathematics - 91% in 2015 to 98% in 2016, which was the #1 ranking in the state. Additionally, the percentage of students scoring in the proficient and distinguished levels increased in Coordinate Algebra and Analytic Geometry over the last two years.

Performance on the ACT has increased each year as well as the total number of test takers.

### **Which area(s) indicate the overall highest performance?**

In reviewing 2016 Georgia Milestones performance results, the areas indicating the overall highest performance are as follows:



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End of Grade Assessments:

English Language Arts and Mathematics - Grades 5, 6, 7, and 8

Science - Grade 8

Social Studies - Grades 4, 5, 6, and 8

End of Course Assessments:

11th Grade Literature

Coordinate Algebra

Analytic Geometry

Biology

Economics

### Which subgroup(s) show a trend toward increasing performance?

The ACCESS for English Learners (EL) is administered annually and is a standards-based, criterion-referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English Learners' social and academic proficiency in English. It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context across the four language domains. School districts are required to administer the assessment based on federal regulations to evaluate EL students in grades K through 12 on their progress in learning to speak English.

The English Learners subgroup shows a trend toward increasing performance based on ACCESS scores from 2015 and 2016. In 2014-2015, approximately 50% of EL students in grades K-2 demonstrated positive movement from one performance band to the next, and in 2015-2016, the percentage increased to 86%. The use of Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention kits has led to improvements in performance among the EL subgroup.

Based on an analysis of subgroup performance from 2015-2016, the students with disabilities, English Learners, and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups show a trend toward increasing performance, particularly in the areas of language arts and mathematics. Although there is data showing increased performance among these subgroups, system and school leaders still acknowledge there is additional work to be done to ensure students across all subgroups are performing at proficient and distinguished levels.

### Between which subgroups is the achievement gap closing?

In the primary grades, the achievement gap is closing between the EL students and white students, which is shown in the percentage of students moving from one performance band to the next based on ACCESS results.

Student achievement results also show that the achievement gap across all subgroups of students is closing in the area of mathematics.

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Students with disabilities, black, and Hispanic subgroups are showing trends toward improvement based on increased percentages of students scoring in the proficient and distinguished learner performance levels.

The achievement gap between white students and Hispanic and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups tend to be closing the most across all four content areas.

Although improvements have been made across the subgroups, there is still work to be done to ensure all students are performing at higher levels. System and school leaders continue to work with teachers to determine ways to move all students from one performance level to the next.

### **Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other data sources?**

The above reported findings are consistent with findings from other local and state data sources including the following: student performance reports generated from various software programs (iRead, System 44, Read 180), Dibels, STAR Math, STAR Reading, z-score data, All in Learning, GKIDS (Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills), locally developed pre- & post tests and other common assessments, and CCRPI (College and Career Ready Performance Indicators) scores.

## **Areas in Need of Improvement**

### **Which area(s) are below the expected levels of performance?**

Based on the review of state level achievement results, the following areas are below the expected levels of performance:

End of Grade Assessments:

English Language Arts - Grade 3

Mathematics - Grade 4

Science - Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 6, Grade 7

Social Studies - Grade 3, Grade 6, Grade 8

End of Course Assessments:

9th Grade Literature

US History

NOTE: While the performance levels of the areas listed above are higher than state averages, they do not fall within the top ten ranking statewide.

In looking at all data sources, student performance in science and social studies tends to be the lowest, particularly science across grades 3-8. As we prepare for the implementation of the new content standards, it is important that system and school leaders work with teachers to unpack the standards, identify priority standards, establish learning targets, and develop assessments aligned to the rigor of the content standards and state mandated tests.

Performance in Grade 3 Language Arts has increased over the last year; however, there is still room for improvement. The implementation of the new iRead program in grades K-2 and a closer curricular and instructional alignment between Jefferson Elementary School and Jefferson Academy is the result of system and school leaders, BOE members, teachers, and other stakeholders reviewing student achievement data and determining areas of improvement. Performance in this particular area is expected to improve over the course of the year, and reports are generated regularly and monitored to ensure program effectiveness.

### **Describe the area(s) that show a negative trend in performance.**

Although performance levels in all grade levels and across all content areas are above the state averages, the following areas show a negative trend in performance from 2015 to 2016:

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End of Grade Assessments:

Science - Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 6, Grade 7

End of Course Assessments:

US History

Other local data sources indicate the level of performance of high-achieving learners in mathematics and language arts is slightly declining as students move from elementary to the middle school level. In reviewing this data, system and school leaders are concerned that the overall percentage of students falling in the distinguished performance level may be impacted if this issue isn't addressed.

### **Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest performance?**

The areas that indicate the overall lowest performance are as follows:

End of Grade Assessments:

English Language Arts - Grade 3

Science - Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 6, Grade 7

End of Course Assessments:

US History

Again, the performance levels are above state averages; however, the results are not consistent with other results typically attained across the grade levels and content areas.

### **Which subgroup(s) show a trend toward decreasing performance?**

In reviewing state assessment results, CCRPI subgroup performance, and other local performance data, there is a trend toward decreasing performance of students with disabilities and black students, particularly in the area of reading. As a result, the performance level of these students in other content areas may be impacted if strategies and interventions are not put in place to address the reading deficiencies.

System and school leaders have worked with teachers to implement reading intervention and other literacy programs designed to address the issue among these groups of students.

While improvements have been made with some students falling into these subgroups, the level of improvement is inconsistent across the grade levels. Additional work must be done to address the performance levels of these students. Student performance data shows the achievement gap is closing slightly but not at rates consistent with other subgroups.

Graduation rates for students falling in the students with disabilities and black subgroups have increased slightly over the last two years.

### **Between which subgroups is the achievement gap becoming greater?**

While there have been slight improvements over the last two years, the achievement gap between white students and students with disabilities is not closing as quickly as other subgroups. In addition, there is also a greater achievement gap between white students and those falling in the black subgroup. System and school leaders have worked with teachers to implement programs, strategies, and interventions designed to address the achievement gap issues; however, additional work is needed to consistently move these students toward levels of proficiency in all four content areas.

### **Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other data sources?**

The above reported findings are consistent with findings from other local and state data sources including the following: student performance reports generated from various software programs (iRead, System 44, Read 180), Dibels, STAR Math, STAR Reading, z-score data, All in Learning, GKIDS (Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills), locally developed pre- & post tests and other common assessments, and CCRPI (College and Career Ready Performance Indicators) scores.

# **AdvancED Assurances**

## **Introduction**

AdvancED Policies and Procedures outline certain requirements that all institutions must meet in order to be in compliance. Institutions are required to verify whether or not they meet these requirements by answering a series of questions and in some cases, attaching evidence for review.

By responding to the questions in ASSIST and attaching evidence when required, the institution has verified whether it meets or does not meet each of the Assurances for Accreditation.

**AdvancED Assurances**

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
1.	The institution has read, understands, and complies with the AdvancED Policies and Procedures.	Yes		

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
2.	The institution has reported all substantive changes in the institution that affect the scope and/or have an impact on the institution's ability to meet the AdvancED standards and policies. Such changes include, but are not limited to: - Restructuring (merging, opening, or closing) of the institution or institution(s) within its jurisdiction - Mission and purpose of the institution - Governance structure of the institution, including changing to a charter school/school system, being the subject of a state takeover, or a change in ownership - Grade levels served by the institution - Staffing, including administrative and other non-teaching professionals personnel - Available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance - Level of funding - School day or school year - Establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus - Student population that causes program or staffing modification(s) - Available programs, including fine arts, practical arts and student activities	Yes		

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
3.	The institution implements a written security and crisis management plan which includes emergency evacuation procedures and appropriate training for stakeholders. Attach the security and crisis management plan. (optional)	Yes		JCS Emergency Procedures

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
4.	The institution monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system.	Yes		

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
5.	The institution engages in a continuous improvement process and implements an improvement plan. Attach the improvement plan if the plan is not located in AdvancED's Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST).	Yes		JCS Strategic Plan 2015-2020 JCS PRIDE School Improvement Cycle



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Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
6.	The system verifies that all institutions within its jurisdiction meet the AdvancED Standards for Schools. Attach a description of the quality assurance process used to monitor the institutions.	Yes		JCS Quality Assurance Process