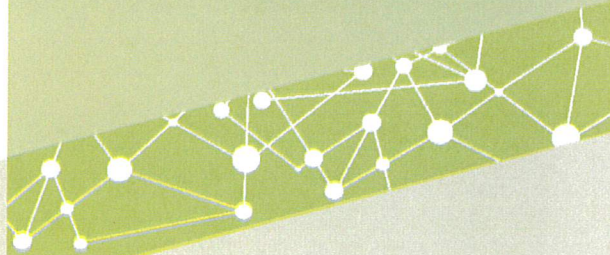


January 28-30, 2019



AdvancED® Engagement Review Report



AdvancED® Performance Accreditation

» **Results for:**
Kershaw County School District
2029 W. DeKalb Street
Camden, South Carolina 29020

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Introduction

AdvancED Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

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

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

AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results

The AdvancED Performance Standards Diagnostic is used by the Engagement Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on AdvancED's Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of the three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity** and **Resource Capacity**. Results are reported within four ranges identified by the colors. The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

Color	Rating	Description
Red	Needs Improvement	Identifies key areas that need more focused improvement efforts
Yellow	Emerging	Represents areas to enhance and extend current improvement efforts
Green	Meets Expectations	Pinpoints quality practices that meet the Standards
Blue	Exceeds Expectations	Demonstrates noteworthy practices producing clear results that exceed expectations

Leadership Capacity Domain

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

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

Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement and success is the primary expectation of every institution. An effective learning culture is characterized by positive and productive teacher/learner relationships; high expectations and standards; a challenging and engaging curriculum; quality instruction and comprehensive support that enable all learners to be successful; and assessment practices (formative and summative) that monitor and measure learner progress and achievement. Moreover, a quality institution evaluates the impact of its learning culture, including all programs and support services and adjusts accordingly.

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

Learning Capacity Standards		Rating
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the system's learning expectations.	Emerging
2.8	The system provides programs and services for learners' educational future and career planning.	Exceeds Expectations
2.9	The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners.	Exceeds Expectations
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.	Needs Improvement
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.	Emerging
2.12	The system implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.	Needs Improvement

Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably so the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The institution examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, organizational effectiveness, and increased student learning.

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

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®)

Results

The AdvancED eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) is a learner-centric classroom observation tool that comprises 28 items organized in seven environments aligned with the AdvancED Standards. Classroom observations are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes. Trained and certified observers take into account the level of embeddedness, quality, and complexity of application or implementation; number of students engaged and frequency of application. Results from the eleot are reported on a scale of one to four based on the students' engagement in and reaction to the learning environment. In addition to the results from the review, the AdvancED Improvement Network (AIN) results are reported to benchmark your results against the network averages. The eleot provides useful, relevant, structured, and quantifiable data on the extent to which students are engaged in activities and/or demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and/or dispositions that are conducive to effective learning.

The insights eleot data provide are an invaluable source of information for continuous improvement planning efforts. Although averages by eleot Learning Environment are helpful to gauge quality at a higher, more impressionistic level, the average rating for each item is more fine-grained, specific and actionable. Institutions should identify the five to seven items with the lowest ratings and examine patterns in those ratings within and across environments to identify areas for improvement. Similarly, identifying the five to seven items with the highest ratings also will assist in identifying strengths within and across eleot Learning Environments. Examining the eleot data in conjunction with other institution data will provide valuable feedback on areas of strength or improvement in institution's learning environments.

eleot® Observations		
Total Number of eleot® Observations	61	
Environments	Rating	AIN
Equitable Learning Environment	2.93	2.86
Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs	2.23	1.89
Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	3.56	3.74
Learners are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner	3.49	3.77
Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions	2.43	2.06
High Expectations Environment	2.99	3.02
Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher	3.07	3.17
Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	3.23	3.14
Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work	2.43	2.83
Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	2.98	3.06
Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning	3.26	2.89
Supportive Learning Environment	3.40	3.61
Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful	3.38	3.66

eleot® Observations		
Total Number of eleot® Observations	61	
Environments	Rating	AIN
Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	3.36	3.49
Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks	3.43	3.66
Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher	3.44	3.66
Active Learning Environment	2.95	3.08
Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and the teacher predominate	3.08	3.34
Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences	2.61	2.80
Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities	3.46	3.43
Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments	2.67	2.74
Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	2.82	3.14
Learners monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored	2.62	3.20
Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work	3.18	3.37
Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content	3.21	3.37
Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed	2.26	2.63
Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.47	3.58
Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other	3.57	3.86
Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others	3.51	3.83
Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another	3.41	3.09
Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions	3.38	3.54
Digital Learning Environment	1.90	1.50
Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	2.38	1.60
Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	1.80	1.46
Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and/or work collaboratively for learning	1.52	1.46

Assurances

Assurances are statements accredited institutions must confirm they are meeting. The Assurance statements are based on the type of institution and the responses are confirmed by the Accreditation Engagement Review Team. Institutions are expected to meet all Assurances and are expected to correct any deficiencies in unmet Assurances.

Assurances			
Met	X	Unmet	
Unmet Assurances			

AdvancED Continuous Improvement System

AdvancED defines continuous improvement as “an embedded behavior rooted in an institution’s culture that constantly focuses on conditions, processes, and practices to improve teaching and learning.” The AdvancED Continuous Improvement System (CIS) provides a systemic fully integrated solution to help institutions map out and navigate a successful improvement journey. In the same manner that educators are expected to understand the unique needs of every learner and tailor the education experience to drive student success, every institution must be empowered to map out and embrace their unique improvement journey. AdvancED expects institutions to use the results and the analysis of data from various interwoven components for the implementation of improvement actions to drive education quality and improved student outcomes. While each improvement journey is unique, the journey is driven by key actions.

The findings of the Engagement Review Team will be organized by the Levels of Impact within i3: Initiate, Improve and Impact. The organization of the findings is based upon the ratings from the Standards Diagnostic and the i3 Levels of Impact.

Initiate

The first phase of the improvement journey is to **Initiate** actions to cause and achieve better results. The elements of the Initiate phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Engagement and Implementation. Engagement is the level of involvement and frequency stakeholders are engaged in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. Implementation is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are monitored and adjusted for quality and fidelity of implementation. Standards identified within Initiate should become the focus of the institution’s continuous improvement journey to move toward the collection, analysis and use of data to measure the results of engagement and implementation. A focus on enhancing the capacity of the institution in meeting the identified Standards has the greatest potential impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Improve

The second phase of the improvement journey is to gather and evaluate the results of actions to **Improve**. The elements of the **Improve** phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Results and Sustainability. Results represents the collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired result(s). Sustainability is results achieved consistently to demonstrate growth and improvement over time (minimum of three years). Standards identified within Improve are those in which the institution is using results to inform their continuous improvement processes and using results over time to demonstrate the achievement of goals. The institution should continue to analyze and use results to guide improvements in student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Impact

The third phase of achieving improvement is **Impact** where desired practices are deeply entrenched. The elements of the **Impact** phase are defined within the Level of Impact of Embeddedness. Embeddedness is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are deeply ingrained in the culture and operation of the institution. Standards identified within Impact are those in which the institution has demonstrated ongoing growth and improvement over time and has embedded the practices within the culture of the institution. Institutions should continue to support and sustain these practices that are yielding results in improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Findings

The findings in this report represent the degree to which the Accreditation Standards are effectively implemented in support of the learning environment and the mission of the institution. Standards which are identified in the **Initiate** phase of practice are considered Priorities for Improvement that must be addressed by the institution to retain accreditation. Standards which are identified in the **Improve** phase of practice are considered Opportunities for Improvement that the institution should consider. Standards which are identified in the **Impact** phase of practice are considered Effective Practices within the institution.

I3 Rubric Levels	STANDARDS
Initiate Priorities for Improvement	Standard: 1.9 Standards: 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12 Standards: 3.1, 3.2
Improve Opportunities for Improvement	Standards: 1.1, 1.2, 1.6, 1.11 Standards: 2.3, 2.4, 2.7
Impact Effective Practices	Standards: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 1.10 Standards: 2.1, 2.8, 2.9 Standards: 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8

Accreditation Status and Index of Education Quality® (IEQ®)

AdvancED will review the results of the Accreditation Engagement Review to make a final determination concerning accreditation status, including the appropriate next steps for your institution in response to these findings. AdvancED provides the Index of Education Quality® (IEQ®) as a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus. The IEQ is comprised of the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: 1) Leadership Capacity; 2) Learning Capacity; and 3) Resource Capacity. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provides information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria. Institutions should review the IEQ in relation to the Findings from the review in the areas of Initiate, Improve and Impact. An IEQ score below 250 indicates that the institution has several areas within the Initiate level and should focus their improvement efforts on those Standards within the Initiate level. An IEQ in the range of 225-300 indicates that the institution has several Standards within the Improve level and is using results to inform continuous improvement and demonstrate sustainability. An IEQ of 275 and above indicates the institution is beginning to reach the Impact level and is engaged in practices that are sustained over time and are becoming ingrained in the culture of the institution.

Below is the average (range) of all AIN institutions evaluated for accreditation in the last five years. The range of the annual AIN IEQ average is presented to enable you to benchmark your results with other institutions in the network.

Institution IEQ	289.68	AIN 5 Year IEQ Range	278.34 – 283.33
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Insights from the Review

The Engagement Review Team engaged in professional discussions and deliberations about the processes, programs and practices within the institution to arrive at the findings of the team. These findings are organized around themes guided by the evidence, examples of programs and practices and provide direction for the institution's continuous improvement efforts. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide contextualized information from the team deliberations and provide information about the team's analysis of the practices, processes, and programs of the institution from the levels of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide next steps to guide the improvement journey of the institution in its efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Accreditation Engagement Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on its current improvement efforts and to adapt and adjust their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

The Engagement Review Team identified five themes from the review that support the continuous improvement process for Kershaw County School District (KCS D). These themes present strengths and opportunities for the district to consider as guidance for their improvement journey.

The team found that the district's purpose statement, "To educate, empower, challenge and prepare students for life, work and productivity as citizens of a global society," motivates the decisions and actions of all stakeholders within the district and those who support and contribute to the schools from the community. The system clearly has provided processes and systems to identify, support and meet the needs of its learners. The team conducted interviews with parent, student, teacher, support staff and community member groups and, without exception, across the 325 individuals contacted during the review, all strongly agreed that the district acts to protect, support and nurture each and all of the children trusted to its care. School board members characterized the role of the board as that of "support for leadership to meet the needs of all students." Board members told the team that they believe they should be present at events, read to students, visit schools and that they were proud of the recent work of the district to avoid sending students to alternative programs unless no other options exist. Community members reported how mental health and other providers have recently developed processes to work with the district and schools to track and support students with excessive absences through tribunals and assistance and partnered to provide on-site health services to students and families in need. Partnerships with community agencies and organizations include after-school programming serving many students every day. Parents told the team how schools rally and support students and families in crises and leaders explained district-led programs and grants that support anti-bullying, reading specialists at all levels, arts showcases and programs for students identified for special services. Students in all of the schools shared how teachers helped them inside and outside of school, how their principals visit with each student, how schools have added clubs like knitting, fishing, books, fans, and other options to the already wide array of traditional sports so that all students have places to go before and after school if desired. Teachers described the implementation of Study Island, students' opportunities for after-school, lunch-time, before-school tutoring and the district's support for strategic intervention classes. Some schools described unique partnerships with the University of South Carolina to learn co-teaching methods for special education and other classroom teachers. All schools reported use of multiple assessments to place, identify and intervene for students' learning needs. Across the district, schools administer Measure of Academic Progress tests at least twice a year, the mandated South Carolina state assessments and monthly curriculum-based measures and the schools monitor and respond to students' results. Response to Intervention (although implementation processes may vary) is required practice in the elementary schools, along

with data tracked in Enrich. STEAM and SEAGUL for enrichment and acceleration is available to most students. Some schools also utilize USA Test Prep, some utilize pre and post testing, and others place students in special programs using teacher recommendations as data. Those schools receiving Title 1 assistance reported gratitude for the district office's strong support for the complex processes and required reporting to ensure continued and increased federal funding. Review of the evidence presented to the team and the district's website identified additional innovative programming at some of the schools including transition classes for kindergarten students, ninth grade restructuring, Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies in place in various degrees in partnership with the county for rewards for desired behavior, mental health partnerships, a Continuous Learning Center – which is an alternative school for grades 6-12 - and Science Research Associates implementation in some Special Education programming. The district also includes an Applied Education Campus that offers industry-recognized certification in 12 different technical areas. Notable achievements over the past five years for this district include bringing the high school graduation rate to an all-time high of 92.2% and incremental increases in the district's Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test scores. Review of survey results reinforced the team's perception of the successful systems of support in place and support for students as integral in defining the culture of the district. Results of the 2018 Parent Culture and Climate Survey included responses to a question that asked parents to characterize the interactions they have had with staff in their child's schools. Forty-three percent of all respondents chose the words "respectful," "supportive," and "helpful" to describe those encounters. Results from the 2018 Student Engagement Survey included responses chosen to complete the phrase, "When I don't know something, I..." Aggregated results from all respondents revealed that 44% of Kershaw County students chose these three responses: "ask my teacher for help during class," "ask my teacher for help," and "discuss the concept with teacher and peers outside of class." The team conducted 61 class observations during the review that included all grade levels in schools across the county using the eleot tool. The Kershaw County mean score results for all indicators in the Supportive Learning Environment was calculated to be 3.4 using a 1-4 scale. The Kershaw County score of 3.4 for this environment is below but is relatively near the AdvancED Improvement Network (AIN) mean of 3.6. However, the Kershaw County mean score for the indicator, "Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions," was 2.43, which is significantly above the AIN mean of 2.06, as was the Kershaw County mean of 2.23 which was significantly above the AIN mean of 1.89 for the indicator, "Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs." Team members observed students engaged in Advanced Placement work at the high schools, problem-based learning at the middle schools and multiple means and configurations for guided reading, guided mathematics and rotations that provided strategic interventions at all grades. Team members reported watching students being highly involved in discussions comparing portrayals of civil rights leaders in past and current films and literature, and lessons on the holocausts of World War II as well as those more recent in Europe and in Africa. Team members observed multiple classrooms that utilized team teaching, with a special educator effectively paired with the classroom teacher. During a focus group interview, one high school senior stated, "We are encouraged to love and support each other. There wasn't even one time, all through my whole time in school from kindergarten until now, that adults were telling me that I could not do something I dreamed of doing. They help us in every way they can." Every student in that focus group then went on to relate their own stories of how they had been supported throughout their time in the schools. The eleot observations, survey results, student achievement score documents provided to the team, the district website, and interviews with all constituent groups support the team's identification of this theme of the district's commitment to determination and provision of support for the needs of each student. It was clear to the team that programs and practices have been in place and continue to be implemented to ensure that students' special needs are met, that all students are provided guidance and opportunities to be prepared for careers and/or for their next educational steps and that those opportunities are available across the district. The district's commitment to support each student is deeply

ingrained and protected throughout the culture and operations of the system. Making sure that support and supportive systems are in place is a priority and a defining characteristic of Kershaw County Schools. The team suggests that support for these programs and processes remains as a priority for the district and that equity and effectiveness of support systems and structures continue to be monitored and evaluated to ensure responsiveness and efficacy.

The district maximizes its resources through well-designed and managed operations and operational processes, safe and well-maintained facilities, effective and consistent communications and exemplary human resources management, practices and processes. District documents, its website and local newspaper articles provided evidence of a recent successful bond referendum for funding of substantial facility construction and renovations for the district and the completion of the proposed projects six months early and under-budget. Interviews conducted during the Engagement Review with district and site staff, parents and community members identified high levels of trust and appreciation for the stewardship of tax payers' funding that the district has earned over years of fiduciary responsibility and careful, collaborative planning. Community members provided several examples of the strength of partnerships developed between the district and the cities, citing an arena designed to preserve the historic value of the landscape, as well as partnerships including those between the district and area institutions of higher education and industries. Financial responsibility for the schools is firmly grounded in analysis of needs assessments and stakeholder input, including surveys and studies conducted that informed recent decisions made for spending for technology, digital resources and safety investments. Solicitation of community input to district budgets included surveys as well as meetings with the superintendent scheduled in several areas of the county. Maintenance of the district's facilities is also a priority of leadership and ensuring students' safety has been a major initiative over the past several years. Teacher Climate and Culture Survey respondents chose the following adjectives most often to describe the physical spaces in which they work: comfortable, inviting, open, bright and flexible. Team members visiting schools noted the well maintained, clean, welcoming spaces in all of the sites. Interviews of students, teachers and site leaders all included statements of pride in their facilities. Review of the district's strategic plan demonstrates strategic resource management that aligns directly with the mission and vision of the district. Operations at the district level also includes responsive and efficient food services that prioritize stakeholder input, holding taste-testings and conducting surveys systematically and making menu changes based on analysis of input. Interviews and documents provided documented that Food Services has created parent committees to address issues of negative balances, partners with "Food for the Soul," and utilizes social media to communicate with parents and students. Food Services works together with Special Education Services to train and tutor students to prepare them for careers and partners with the United Way to provide summer meals. Communications for Kershaw County Schools has received awards for its public relations and its website. The district utilizes Blackboard Connect, a parent portal, Facebook, podcasts, electronic flyers (Peachjar), a mobile application, and the superintendent holds bi-monthly cabinet meetings with teachers, support staff, parents and students to conduct face-to-face conversations. Team members interviewing teachers, students and support staff in the schools during the Engagement Review were told, in every school, who were the representatives to the superintendent's cabinet meetings and how each constituent group could connect to ask questions and receive answers from the superintendent. Parents and students interviewed also reported the effectiveness of communications of the district and noted their appreciation of the many modalities available to them. Students interviewed also noted the availability of student handbooks through the website as well. One student stated, "We have no excuse to not know what the rules are." Student Engagement Survey results aligned with the data gathered through interviews and evidence provided. When asked to complete the survey statement, "School rules...." most students responded with the following choices: "...are established for a good reason," "... help me make good choices," "...let me know what I can do," "... help me to be a good student," and "... help me to be a better student." Only 5.5% of respondents chose the

statement, "...are hard to follow." Human Resources for the district has embedded systems in place for effective, efficient policies and procedures to guide practices that assist the district to provide staffing and supervision and has earned the trust of district personnel and community members. Faculty evaluation procedures are formal and data from evaluations are available to inform curriculum, instruction and professional development. Human Resources provides induction and mentoring processes that follow effective protocol, and according to staff and leadership groups interviewed, are very effective and appreciated. Certification pathways and improvement plans are monitored, and assistance is provided. Human Resources also hosts career fairs to recruit highly effective teachers. The district's System Quality Factors document identifies the "proper allocation of resources in KCSD is based on the district's mission..." and "Bolstered by stakeholder input, budget priorities are aligned to resources through data driven processes to maximize student achievement. Human, material and fiscal resources are placed at various sites based on priority of need as determined by data." The document and evidence provided also noted that the district has been recognized by the Center for American Progress for its positive use of resources. The team recognized the efficacious, responsible, operational process of the district to be deeply ingrained and protected in the culture of the system as evident in the trust of the constituencies served by the schools and the commitment of the governing body to maintain the trust of the community. The team recommends that operations in the district remain responsive and continue to reflect the values of the community served, continuously monitoring effectiveness and keeping student learning at the center of the work.

The district has instituted multiple, ambitious initiatives that may have far-reaching impact for generations of students. The team encourages the system to continue to assess these new initiatives and their effects on student learning. The team noted that the district has undertaken several initial attempts to gather feedback as these initiatives are being moved to full implementation. The team encourages the district to continue to gather feedback from users to determine obstacles to implementation and fidelity of implementation. In addition, the team encourages responsive analysis of feedback as initiatives are implemented as well as establishment of additional feedback mechanisms that can determine connections between the initiatives and actual effect on student learning. As stated in the district's literature," the district's vision is accomplished through the work of the purpose statement, that KCSD will 'educate all students for success,'" and the stated focus of the district is on each individual child's learning. Keeping that focus of the individual child and that child's learning at the center as multiple, concurrent, large-scale instructional delivery modes are added to the schools and as schools' configurations and leader's expectations change, will be challenging. District documents included a list of instructional "non-negotiables" that provide direction for leadership, instructional focuses for teachers and students, expectations for assessments, data analysis and use and that includes expectations for the embedded use of "viable technology to enhance teaching and learning." The district has recently fully launched its 1:1 technology upgrade, provided a computing device to every student from kindergarten through twelfth grade and has instituted an eLearning platform which promises to eliminate days missed due to weather or students being homebound and enable myriad options for credit recovery, added courses, common blended learning plans across all subjects, shared opportunities across the schools and many other options. This Digital Convergence Initiative includes blended learning and personalized learning as elements of the vision for the district's instructional delivery. This initiative is coming to full implementation as the district is also beginning full implementation of a Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model, supported by late-start Wednesdays to provide time for staff to meet and plan. Agendas and materials made available to the team provided evidence of multiple training opportunities for teachers in use of technology and for leadership as to concepts regarding PLC expectations. Interviews with teachers, across the district identified both excitement for the challenges and opportunities of the initiatives and trepidation regarding unclear expectations, support and preparedness. Interviews with district-level leadership reflected the themes of the faculty, though all supported the initiatives. Interviews with building-level leadership groups included a disparate range of interpretations of their roles in supporting PLC groups and varied

levels of vision and priorities regarding the goals and uses of digital options for learning. Observations of classrooms across the district during the review identified differentiated learning opportunities occurring in classrooms as a strength in the district, as well as learners engaging in activities that are challenging but attainable. Kershaw County has been a pioneering district in digital technology, and scores for the Digital Learning Environment on the eleot tool were all above the mean for the AdvancED Improvement Network. Scores on those indicators of the eleot could indicate that teachers in the district have many ideas and employ successful practices in active, challenging, individualized learning as well as use of technology to share with one another. Structured, strategic PLC processes, if classroom data is used to inform practices, in correlation with student achievement results, could provide rich opportunities for that sharing to occur. Data collected regarding implementation of the initiatives provided to the team to date included usage numbers and surveys that had been administered to staff following trainings but had not been analyzed at the time of the review. Although stakeholder feedback had been solicited and reportedly showed support prior to purchase of the technology required for the initiatives, the team was not presented with a plan to systematically monitor and evaluate the implementation of these large changes to the work of teachers, students and leaders, nor of these initiative's effects on students' learning. Plans to monitor fidelity of both digital delivery as well as PLC development, determine systemic obstacles to effectiveness, effectiveness of training and needs for further training across constituent groups, and assurance to those in the field that feedback during implementation is valued by the district could lessen stress, clarify communications and increase success as initiatives are realized. A planned and communicated quality assurance process, developed and administered systemically and systematically can help to increase effectiveness, equity and consistency of implementation of initiatives. Once new processes and procedures are sufficiently in place, the role of the system can then move from monitoring and ensuring implementation to also determining effect on learning, both at individual student and at the system's levels. The team recognized and commends the commitment of the district to prepare students for their futures in a digital age. The team recommends that the district continues to clearly communicate the desired results of initiatives, including goals for student learning, to use multiple sources of system-wide data and evidence to inform quality and fidelity, and systematically monitor and adjust to demonstrate progress toward stated goals.

The team did not find evidence that the district engages in systemic, systematic processes to ensure all curricula are clearly aligned to standards, current assessments and best practices. Enacted subject-area scope and sequenced curricula, based on current academic standards, aligned with common, valid assessments and clearly defined expectations for student performance were not evident to the team. Review of documents provided to the team, along with the district's website and state-wide public data did include pacing guides for schools in Kershaw County Schools that were updated to reflect state standards' revisions as of 2016, as notated. District subject specialists, according to building-level faculty interviewed by team members, provide program support and advocacy. However, according to faculty and leadership groups interviewed by the team members, the district does not utilize a formal, systemic curriculum review cycle or formal review processes, nor are there systematic processes and expectations in place for faculty to work together to formally evaluate and institute revisions, updates and alignment of curriculum to reflect changes in standards and state or other large-scale testing, current best practices or new discoveries. The existing pacing guides, which are in place in lieu of subject scope and sequence documents, are utilized to various degrees without systematic oversight or accountability from the district level. Each building leadership team and groups of faculty interviewed reported use of a variety of assessments and assessment measures to determine effectiveness of each teacher's choices for curriculum and instructional methods, with the exceptions of state and district mandated tests. Teachers and staff interviewed in the sites reported that some informal, ad-hoc, intra-district faculty collaborations voluntarily had occurred at times among some teachers to align curriculum with standards or end-of-course exams, but none reported having participated in formal curriculum review and revision cycles. And, although all teachers were directed to use the

district mandated texts, there were reported exceptions in practice. The team conducted interviews with district leadership and found that, although there has been some perceived progress toward alignment of standards, curriculum and assessment, there is acknowledgement of a significant amount of work yet to be accomplished. Lack of common academic language, understanding of curriculum and unit design and lack of district-wide, inter-school collaboration were cited as obstacles to curriculum work. School leaders in buildings reported various strategies in place to address curriculum at their sites, from asking teachers to vertically align across their building's grade levels, to deliberate staff time set aside to unpack standards and provision of staff development in backward design. Through interviews and review of documents, it was apparent to the team that curriculum work was occurring at sites. However, these practices were not capitalizing on the economy of scale or sharing of expertise and experience that could be beneficial to all of the students in the system. District-wide student achievement reported through state testing over the past three academic years does not demonstrate significant growth or lessening of achievement gaps between schools or between populations identified. Initial analysis of the KCSD results on the SCPass and SCReady assessments show relative stability if not slight decline and marked disparity that has remained in place in the scores of schools within the district. End-of-course assessments also have remained relatively stable, with slight declines in some areas and the intra-district gaps in student achievement as the results are disaggregated, also appear to have remained stable. Review of the Teacher Inventory Survey administered during 2018 included results to the question: "I use a formal process to measure the success of the implementation of curriculum, instruction and educational programs." Of the 388 respondents, 32 skipped that question, 9 answered "seldom," 35 answered "sometimes," 118 answered "often," and 194 answered "almost always," demonstrating an array of experiences across the district. Classroom observations conducted during the review using the eleot included results to the indicator, "Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work," which can correlate with common high expectations across courses in schools. The KCSD score for this indicator was 2.43, which is below the AIN mean of 2.83. The district's current practices of curriculum implementation and use of disparate metrics create obstacles to determination of the effectiveness of curriculum choices and other initiatives across the district. In the past, the district's philosophy of autonomy for each school to serve its constituency best has been perceived as successful. However, as the district enters its Digital Convergence Initiative age, and as the district's population continues to grow and change, it is important that the autonomy necessary to keep the character of each school its own does not impede the progress that could occur if the schools unite as a system to work together to plan and make sure that all students are held to the same set of high expectations and to evaluate the effectiveness of the district's adopted curriculum. Without common understanding of student performance expectations, current academic standards, available resources, and employment of common metrics that are clearly aligned with key standards, it becomes too complex to evaluate whether the district has expended resources on curriculum and instructional choices that are effective. The team suggests that the district engages all faculty and other appropriate stakeholders in systematic cycles of curriculum review and revision that include selection of common metrics and common student performance expectations. As curriculum revision cycles progress, the district can monitor and adjust for quality and fidelity of implementation in order to systematically collect reliable, valid data to inform further curricular and other educational decisions.

The team did not find evidence that system-wide professional development in the district had been systematically informed by staff supervision data, by research-based responses to common limitations identified by assessments of student achievement, or that it was organized to promote collaboration and collegiality with the purpose to improve students' performance and organizational effectiveness at the time of the review. School leaders and teachers interviewed during the review explained how professional development in their own sites had been occurring. Some school leaders determined staff development through staff surveys, others were informed by student achievement results and supervision information and others brought in ideas from current literature or

conferences attended, and combinations of all the above. Some schools described communities of practice in place at grade levels or in subject areas, others utilized outside consultants for intense, strategic work, some schools had instituted peer sharing, book club and lesson-study models, while others were led by the specialists housed in the buildings. As software platforms have been instituted, sites have attended trainings and have received support from the district, and some site-level teams have shared their use of these platforms with other faculty using electronic communities of practice. The team was unable to find a framework for instructional technology implementation for reference, however classroom observations using the eleot resulted in scores above the AIN mean for all of the indicators in the Digital Learning Domain, providing evidence of the effective use of classroom technology across the district. During one focus group, principals describing the professional development occurring in their sites were surprised and interested to learn of the activities happening across the district. Teachers described ad hoc, intra-district sharing of lesson ideas occurring, but were not aware of systemic professional development targeted to address achievement gaps or other data. Teachers and district leadership described an annual professional development day that occurs at the beginning of the school year. During this day, subject area groups meet, and sessions are offered based on requests from teachers. Agendas and notices from and for this day described offerings that included sharing of some technology and instructional best practices. Schools can request professional development from district specialists. Teachers and site leaders were appreciative of the responsiveness of the district office to requests for specific professional development needs and for site-specific training and support for student services and technology. School leaders did not describe how the system utilized systemic supervision or student achievement data to inform professional development planning or delivery. Documents provided to the Engagement Review Team included a district Professional Development Plan, however that document detailed interventions for supervision of employees identified. Review of surveys and inventories administered to teachers included responses indicating a wide range of involvement in programs to verify success of school or district programs and participation in formal, professional collaboration with peers. When asked whether they had participated in formal training in use of assessment data, 46 of the 346 respondents replied “rarely,” 72 replied, “regularly, not frequently,” 93 replied “sporadically,” and 135 replied, “regularly and frequently.” When asked to respond to the statement, “I participate in targeted professional learning activities designed to meet the individual needs of my students,” 32 of the 388 respondents skipped the question, 12 replied, “rarely,” 69 chose “regularly but not frequently,” and 144 chose “often.” System-wide student achievement data as reflected in state-mandated assessments has remained relatively steady for the past three reporting years, showing marginal growth in the district’s work to increase student performance or to address disparities. The district has plans in place to begin utilizing a PLC model as support for its Digital Convergence Initiative that includes designated time set aside, system-wide, each Wednesday morning for staff to work together, but at the time of the review, expectations for those PLC groups were not available. Analysis of multiple sources of data and evidence, including student achievement results and information gathered from staff supervision and observations in addition to surveys and current literature could work together to inform strategic, systemic choices for professional development that can be supported and sustained, monitored and adjusted for quality and focused on increasing student achievement and the efficacy of the district’s programs. District-level determination of what programs and practices are in place or are in development across all of the district’s schools and evaluation of the efficacy of identified programs would enable the district to capitalize on the myriad islands of excellence occurring in many locations across the county and bring that excellence to scale through professional development. Deliberate and centralized processes to evaluate the effectiveness of current and developing programs would also provide the system with data to inform system-wide professional development choices specifically designed to address areas of instructional need or curriculum revision. The district is proud of the building-level autonomy of its decision-making. Each high school and feeder schools have stood as separate community schools serving their own constituencies. While the team is sensitive to the uniqueness of every neighborhood and every region of the county, the implementation of a highly digital connectedness that is the

district's Digital Convergence vision, along with changing demographics in parts of the district will soon blur, if not erase the isolation of each of the separate school communities. What is now perhaps perceived as a strength in one part of the county may appear to be an inequity in others unless leadership takes steps to find what is working well and ensure that all students have access to those programs and means of instruction. The team recommends that the district engages in strategic, data-informed, collaborative professional development that is clearly focused on student achievement and organizational efficacy. As the district's PLC initiative is established, clear expectations, followed by monitoring and adjustment for quality and fidelity will provide a platform for sharing and collaborative practice that could increase student success and capitalize on the effective work and talents of so many individuals in the district.

The Engagement Review Team submits these findings and insights from the review in hopes that they may prove helpful as Kershaw County Schools continues its improvement journey.

Next Steps

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

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

Team Roster

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

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Julia Williams, Ph.D. Lead Evaluator	<p>Julia Williams, Ph.D., is a Professor of Education at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Her areas of specialty include assessment, continuous improvement processes and planning and program evaluation. She is a licensed secondary principal and district superintendent. Dr. Williams' research and publications include studies of schools and the integration of leadership, staff development, student achievement and supervision. She has served as primary investigator and as evaluator on grants awarded by the National Science Foundation and the US Department of Homeland Security. Over the past 25 years, Julia has served as lead evaluator for over 100 reviews for schools, systems, digital schools, corporations, corporation systems and other categories across the AdvancED organization. She has been a member of the Minnesota State Council for many years and received the Excellence in Education Award for the state in 2013. She has served as a member of the Commission on Schools and serves as an AdvancED lead evaluator mentor for systems and corporations.</p>
Dr. Ashley Atkinson	<p>Dr. Ashley Atkinson is the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction in Spartanburg School District Five. During his thirty-two year career, Dr. Atkinson has fulfilled the duties of director of accountability, assessment, and research, gifted and talented coordinator, English Language Learner coordinator, secondary assistant principal/registrar, guidance director, associate principal for curriculum and instruction, technology coach, adjunct professor of computer science and education, teacher of mathematics, computer science, and chemistry, and varsity coach of football, wrestling and golf. He holds an Ed.D. in educational leadership with an emphasis on literacy from Nova Southeastern University, a Master's of library and information science from the University of South Carolina, and a B.S. degree in mathematics from Francis Marion University. Dr. Atkinson chairs the Spartanburg School District Five AdvancED Leadership Team, continually serves on AdvancED Engagement Reviews, and serves in South Carolina as an AdvancED lead evaluator for schools.</p>

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Dr. Dixon Brooks	Dr. Dixon Brooks is currently the interim director of secondary education in Lexington School District Two. Dr. Brooks holds a Ph.D. in educational administration with an emphasis in curriculum and instruction from the University of South Carolina. He also has a B.M. in music education, as well as a M.S. and Ed.S. in educational administration. During his twenty-five years in education, Dr. Brooks has fulfilled the positions of middle school band director, middle school assistant principal, middle school principal and high school principal. He currently chairs the AdvancED leadership team for Lexington School District Two, is a frequent member on AdvancED Engagement Review teams, and serves as an evaluator for the South Carolina Department of Education and National School to Watch for the South Carolina Association for Middle Level Educators.
Dr. Jennifer Coleman	Dr. Jennifer Coleman is currently the executive director for accountability, assessment, research and evaluation in Richland School District One. During her 17 years in public education, she has worked with accountability, assessment, data analysis, program evaluation and student information systems. She has served as the chair of the South Carolina Association of School Administrators' Testing and Accountability Roundtable since its inception 8 years ago. She holds a Ph.D. in educational psychology and research from the University of South Carolina, an M.A. in educational psychology from the University of Georgia and a B.A. in psychology from the University of South Carolina. Dr. Coleman oversees the Richland School District One's AdvancED team, as well as the creation and implementation of the district's strategic plan.
Mr. Jason Dropik	Jason P. Dropik is the head of school for the Indian Community School in Franklin, Wisconsin. As head of school he oversees all aspects of the facility, operations, and programming. Mr. Dropik received his Master's in administrative leadership from Concordia University. He also has a B.A. degree in elementary education. Mr. Dropik has experience as a teacher in both public and private schools. He has served on state curriculum teams, board of directors for private schools. He holds Wisconsin State Certification in school safety, is a member of the Wisconsin Association of Environmental Education and has administrative experience as both associate principal and head of school. He has served on an AdvancED Engagement Review team and has hosted the school process twice.

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Dr. Shirley Sealy	<p>Dr. Shirley Sealy is the chief academic officer for the Cherokee County School District in Cherokee County, SC. In that position, Dr. Sealy coordinates the curriculum implementation process and the professional development activities for one primary school, eleven elementary schools, four middle schools, two high schools, one alternative school, one career and technology center, and one adult education program in the district. Dr. Sealy holds an Ed.D. in curriculum and instruction from Gardner Webb University. She also has an Ed.S. degree in administration, an M.Ed. degree in administration, and M.Ed. and B.S. degrees in secondary education with concentrations in biology. Dr. Sealy has experience as a teacher and administrator in K-12 education, as a middle and high school teacher, and as an elementary and middle school principal. Additionally, she serves as an adjunct faculty member at several universities in North Carolina and South Carolina. This was Dr. Sealy's first time serving on an AdvancED Engagement Review Team, although in the past she served on several other system-wide accreditation review teams. Dr. Sealy also supervises the AdvancED leadership team for the Cherokee County School District.</p>

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