

# Report of the External Review Team for Craven County Schools

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**Date: April 9, 2017 - April 12, 2017**



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# Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Use of Diagnostic Tools

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

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

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

## Index of Education Quality

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

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

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

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

## Benchmark Data

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

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

## Powerful Practices

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

## Opportunities for Improvement

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

## Improvement Priorities

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

## The Review

The Craven County Schools hosted a Public Schools Systems External Review on April 9-12, 2017. Six members of the External Review Team (Team) spent four days to support the Craven County School System's participation in the review step of the AdvancED process of continuous improvement. Three team members were from North Carolina, while two members were from South Carolina and one from Florida. The Team's professional experiences and educational expertise allowed them to assess and evaluate the system's effectiveness in meeting the systemic, systematic and sustainable improvement requirements of accreditation. During the four days, the Team reviewed evidence provided by the system, interviewed 390 stakeholders and observed 75 classes using the Effective Environments Observation Tool (eleot™).

Craven County is located in eastern North Carolina. The system is in an area rich in history; New Bern served as the first capitol of North Carolina and many historic landmarks are in the city. The system is comprised of three distinct attendance areas: Havelock, primarily a military community, New Bern, an urban community and West Craven, primarily a rural area. Craven County Schools serve 14,071 students in twenty-five schools.

The Lead Evaluator communicated with the system contact to ensure all arrangements were in place before the review. Accreditation reports were submitted in a timely manner, allowing sufficient time for team members

to study the Self Assessment, artifacts provided by the system and the system website. The system engaged in a thorough and comprehensive process to develop the Self Assessment. Members of the Team participated in an orientation conference call. Numerous email communications enabled the Team to be fully prepared for the visit. All members of the Team reviewed system and school reports and the evidence shared by the system.

On Sunday afternoon, April 9, the Team met in the conference room of a New Bern hotel which was located on the scenic New Bern harbor and Neuse River to review the accreditation process and share initial thoughts about the system's ratings. The Team developed questions based on the information provided by the system and contained in the Self Assessment. Artifacts from the system and each school were provided prior to the Team's arrival. Review of the schedule and logistics related to the External Review concluded the initial Team meeting. A meal at the North Carolina History Center for the Team and stakeholders from the system, community, school board, parents and student populations was hosted by the system allowing Team members to interact informally with stakeholders representing a wide range of groups and to learn more about the system and the community.

On Monday, April 10, the Team was transported to the system office by district personnel. After an organizational meeting for the Team, the superintendent's overview provided additional information about the system. The overview included a historical perspective of the system. The superintendent's interview with the Team provided additional information about system initiatives and identified goals and challenges. The Standards overview provided information specific to the five AdvancED Standards, the Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic and the Student Performance Diagnostic. The Team interviewed board members in six groups, all principals, parents and community representatives throughout the day. Interviews with system personnel who worked on each Standard gave the Team additional information with regard to all Standards. The Team considered feedback from these interviews along with information from the system and school reports, evidence and classroom observations to draw conclusions about the system's improvement efforts.

On Tuesday, team members visited twelve schools, interviewed school leadership teams and conducted classroom observations using the elect. At the evening meeting, the Team reviewed the results of the elect observations, discussed additional information gathered from the interviews and identified possible Powerful Practices, Improvement Priorities and Opportunities for Improvement. The Team rated all indicators individually at the end of the work session.

On Wednesday, the Team met at the system office to finalize action statements. Each member entered final ratings into ASSIST. Consensus regarding all findings was reached. Statements were drafted and edited to be included in the Exit Report. The review concluded with an Exit Report to the school board and system and school leadership. At the conclusion of the Exit Report, the Team departed.

The Team expressed its appreciation to the Craven County Schools for its hospitality and willingness to participate in the AdvancED accreditation process. The system is commended for their preparations for the Team's visit, prompt responses to the Team's requests for additional information and commitment to continuous improvement. Throughout the External Review, system and school leaders, faculty and staff



provided candid responses to interview questions and reflections about their continuous improvement initiatives. From the Team's arrival to its departure, the hospitality was outstanding. The lodging arrangements and meals provided the Team with every comfort. The system's transparency provided valuable information as the Team validated the Self Assessment Report.

Stakeholders were interviewed by members of the External Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's effectiveness and student performance. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the External Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Superintendents	1
Board Members	7
Administrators	58
Instructional Staff	165
Support Staff	12
Students	115
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>390</b>

# Results

## Teaching and Learning Impact

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	2.67	2.69
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	2.00	2.49
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.67	2.59
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.00	2.71
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	2.00	2.58
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.50	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	3.00	2.60

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.00	2.97
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	2.17	2.50
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	2.00	2.47
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.00	2.65
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.00	2.64

### Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.00	2.66
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	2.33	2.49
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	2.00	2.15
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	2.33	2.50
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	3.17	2.75

### Student Performance Diagnostic

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

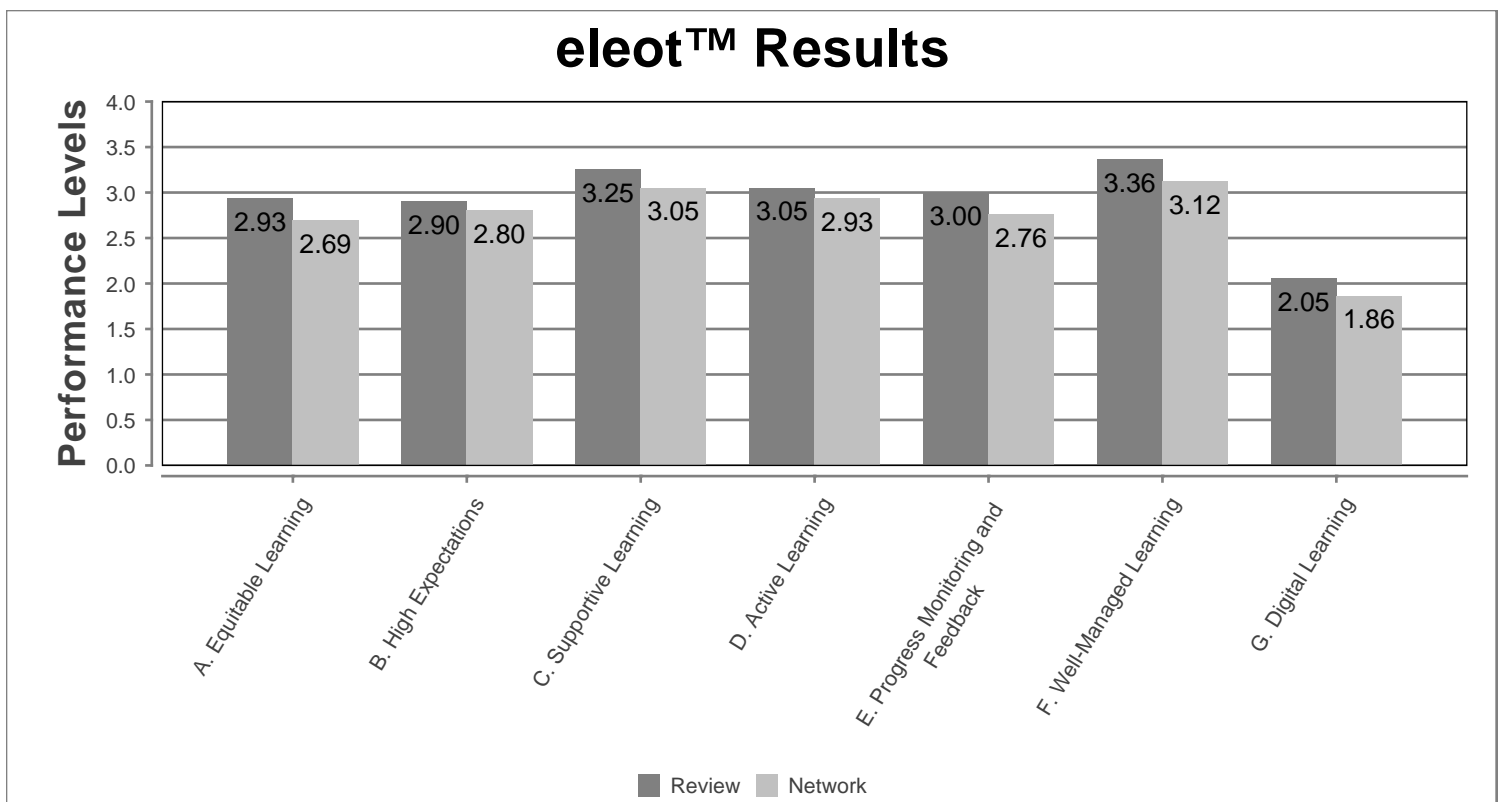
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	4.00	3.33
Test Administration	4.00	3.52
Equity of Learning	2.00	2.54
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.96

## Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

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



The External Review Team conducted classroom observations in twelve schools on Tuesday of the visit. A total of 75 classroom observations were conducted at the elementary and secondary levels. After participating in interviews, studying artifacts and analyzing student performance data, team members used the eleot to corroborate information reviewed in artifacts and gathered during interviews. The seven areas of the learning environments were scored by six trained observers. All learning environments exceeded the AdvancED

Network (AEN) averages.

The seven environments ranged from 2.05 to a 3.36 average on a four-point scale that lists 1=Not observed, 2=Somewhat Evident, 3=Evident and 4=Very Evident. The two highest environments were Well-Managed Learning Environment (3.36) and Supportive Learning Environment (3.5). The lowest environment was Digital Learning (2.05). The lowest scoring environments were Equitable Learning (2.93), High Expectations (2.90) and Digital Learning (2.05).

The three highest sub scores overall were F1 "speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers" (3.61), F2 "follows classroom rules and works well with others" (3.55) and F5 "knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences: (3.57). These scores support the overall findings of the External Review Team during the Review.

The Team observed that students at the elementary and secondary levels were respectful and positive when interacting with staff and classmates. The components of the Well-Managed Environment were usually evident. Discussions with students and staff in all schools indicated a great deal of pride in the school. The Team observed positive, caring interactions between students and teachers. During the exit presentation, the Lead Evaluator included mention of the positive rapport between students and teachers observed during school visits.

The Supportive Learning Environment score of 3.25 placed it above the AEN of 3.05. Observations indicated that students were willing to take risks in learning and were provided assistance to understand lesson objectives. "Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning" received a rating of 3.38. The lowest rated indicator of this learning environment was "is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs" with an average rating of 2.88. High expectations for student learning appeared to be an area of concern. The sub-scores for A1, "has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet his/her needs" (2.42) and B5, "is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking..." (2.73) support this area of concern. Although there were pockets of excellence where rigor was extremely high, this was not consistently observed. For example, in one elementary math class, students were engaged in challenging activities, technology was seamlessly incorporated into the instruction and students worked on different tasks based on individual learning needs. In other elementary school math classes, whole group instruction was observed. The Team applied these data in making judgments about ratings for several Indicators in Standard 3 that speak to challenging, equitable and differentiated learning experiences to prepare students for their futures.

Student use of technology did not appear to be systemic. The Digital Learning Environment is not about the use of computer programs or teacher instruction using technology; instead the three sub-scores in this environment require the students to be engaged in the use of the tools for learning. Team members observed students using digital devices to research topics, solve problems and gather information in some classrooms and no student use of digital devices in other classrooms. Although the score for this Digital Learning Environment was above the AEN average, it was the lowest of all environment scores.

During observations, the Team noted that students followed classroom routines, transitioned smoothly and interacted respectfully with teachers and their peers. During discussions, all team members agreed interactions and examples of mutual respect among students and teachers occurred systemically across grade levels and schools. All seven learning environments were rated above the AEN averages. Team members observed limited active engagement by students in differentiated classroom activities. Domains that are priority areas for further consideration by system leadership include High Expectations with a focus on higher order thinking skills and Equitable Learning with a focus on differentiated learning opportunities that meet the individual needs of students.



**eleot™ Data Summary**

<b>A. Equitable Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	2.42	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	24.32%	22.97%	22.97%	29.73%
2.	3.49	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	50.00%	48.65%	1.35%	0.00%
3.	3.54	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	54.05%	45.95%	0.00%	0.00%
4.	2.26	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	21.62%	27.03%	6.76%	44.59%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.93</b>						

<b>B. High Expectations</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.12	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	35.14%	43.24%	20.27%	1.35%
2.	3.05	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	31.08%	44.59%	22.97%	1.35%
3.	2.68	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	25.68%	32.43%	25.68%	16.22%
4.	2.91	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	27.03%	39.19%	31.08%	2.70%
5.	2.73	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	24.32%	33.78%	32.43%	9.46%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.90</b>						

<b>C. Supportive Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.38	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	45.95%	45.95%	8.11%	0.00%
2.	3.36	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	44.59%	47.30%	8.11%	0.00%
3.	3.39	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	47.30%	44.59%	8.11%	0.00%
4.	3.23	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	37.84%	47.30%	14.86%	0.00%
5.	2.88	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	29.73%	36.49%	25.68%	8.11%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.25</b>						

<b>D. Active Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.11	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	40.54%	33.78%	21.62%	4.05%
2.	2.80	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	32.43%	31.08%	20.27%	16.22%
3.	3.26	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	43.24%	39.19%	17.57%	0.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.05</b>						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.99	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	29.73%	40.54%	28.38%	1.35%
2.	3.18	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	33.78%	50.00%	16.22%	0.00%
3.	3.03	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	28.38%	47.30%	22.97%	1.35%
4.	2.77	Understands how her/his work is assessed	29.73%	28.38%	31.08%	10.81%
5.	3.05	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	32.43%	43.24%	21.62%	2.70%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.00</b>						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.61	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	63.51%	33.78%	2.70%	0.00%
2.	3.55	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	58.11%	39.19%	2.70%	0.00%
3.	3.18	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	48.65%	32.43%	6.76%	12.16%
4.	2.92	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	41.89%	27.03%	12.16%	18.92%
5.	3.57	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	58.11%	40.54%	1.35%	0.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.36</b>						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.14	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	22.97%	16.22%	12.16%	48.65%
2.	2.09	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	20.27%	18.92%	10.81%	50.00%
3.	1.92	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	17.57%	13.51%	12.16%	56.76%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.05</b>						

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Design, implement and monitor a system-wide continuous program of professional learning that builds capacity among all staff and is aligned to the system’s purpose and direction.

(Indicator 3.11)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.11

#### Evidence and Rationale

The Team’s review of artifacts, interviews and observations found limited evidence of a fully functioning systematic and systemic professional development program. The system had adopted the Learning Focused Schools Model of professional learning. The Team reviewed the five-year implementation timeline for Learning Focused Plan which included goals, activities and clearly defined outcomes for each year. The system is currently in the second year of implementation. Although significant resources have been dedicated to the successful implementation of the Learning Focus Schools Model, interviews with school leadership and staff indicated the training was not always comprehensive. The fidelity of the implementation of the strategies is contingent on all system staff demonstrating an understanding of the process and a commitment to it. An additional initiative for the system is the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) which provides a framework for total school improvement. A deployment plan for the integration of the MTSS process included timelines and training. The elementary school staffs had been trained in MTSS and were using the system; middle school teachers were trained in the 2016-17 school year with the program implementation planned for the 2017-18 year. High school training and implementation are planned for the 2018-2020 school years. Although evidence that professional learning initiatives about MTSS and Learning Focus had been developed, a comprehensive professional learning plan which incorporated all components of professional development was

not evident. Interviews with teachers and leadership teams indicated the professional learning activities provided by the system did not consistently provide staff with meaningful opportunities to learn, implement, monitor and adjust professional practice. Teachers indicated follow-up and additional support should be an integral part of the system's professional learning plan.

A comprehensive professional development plan provides intentional training for all staff. Meaningful professional learning activities build capacity among the staff and result in improved instructional practice. A data-driven professional learning plan targets identified strategies to improve student learning.

### **Improvement Priority**

Develop, implement and evaluate a relevant, rigorous, vertically and horizontally aligned K-12 curriculum that ensures high expectations for all students to become college, career and citizenship ready.

(Indicator 3.2)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.2

#### Evidence and Rationale

Review of artifacts, interviews and observations revealed a systematically aligned K-12 curriculum was not evident. Formalized processes and procedures to ensure a seamless K-12 curriculum had not been developed. System leaders identified the need for vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment as a part of the Standards overview provided to the Team. The elite observations conducted by the External Review team provided additional evidence regarding the need to develop a rigorous, relevant curriculum. In forty-seven percent of the classrooms observed, it was very evident/evident that students were engaged in "differentiated learning opportunities that met his/her needs." (A1). Review of student achievement data indicated students in some grades approached or surpassed state averages. A system leader commented, "Demographics should not matter. We expect all our students to be high performers. There is no reason they shouldn't be." Student achievement levels varied by school, with some schools outperforming others on state mandated assessments. The superintendent commented, "we need to address the rigorous delivery of instruction." The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has adopted new curriculum in every area in recent years. The Team's review of the system's analysis of the new standards revealed a comprehensive, system-wide process to unpack and analyze them had not been developed. School leadership teams had reviewed and analyzed the new standards, but inconsistency in these practices across the system was noted by the Team. Some schools had reviewed the standards and developed targeted practices to incorporate them in the curriculum and instructional practice, but a systemic and systematic process to ensure all students were provided the same quality curriculum was not evident to the Team. Interviews with school leadership teams and individual teachers suggested to the Team the vertical alignment of the curriculum had not been done. Interviews with school and system leadership revealed that some horizontal alignment had begun, but the practice was limited to specific grades and subject areas. For example, work had begun on the horizontal alignment of the math curriculum based on the new state standards. Some initiatives to align the curriculum in individual schools was reported in interviews with school leadership, but an intentional alignment of the K-12

curriculum and a process to facilitate the alignment were not apparent. Interviews with system and school leadership suggested to the Team, a formalized, systemic process to determine student readiness for college and career had not been developed.

Instructional practice, curriculum and assessment are integrally linked. When instruction is rigorous, the curriculum challenging and assessment is used to measure student learning, improved student learning and increased student achievement becomes evident.

### **Improvement Priority**

Develop, implement and evaluate a systemic and systematic process to formally and consistently monitor instructional practice with fidelity to ensure alignment with the system's purpose and direction to improve student learning.

(Indicator 2.6, Indicator 3.4)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.4

#### Evidence and Rationale

Review of artifacts, interviews and observations revealed a systematic, systemic process to formally monitor instruction was not evident. The Team's review of the 5x5 document, a component of the Learning Focus model, designed to review instruction and provide data to inform and monitor instruction suggested the system had identified the need to monitor instruction in all schools, but the process had not been implemented with fidelity. School leadership and peer walk through observations were conducted with feedback to teachers; however, analysis of the data to make instructional changes was limited. The eleot rating for A5, "Differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs" was 2.42 suggesting to the Team the need for additional differentiated learning activities to meet student learning needs. Interviews with school and system leadership suggested the 5x5 document was not used systematically. A staff member stated, "we do not have a common language to monitor instruction."

Systemic and systematic monitoring of instructional practice to ensure alignment with the system's vision and mission will provide a framework to positively impact student learning.

# Leadership Capacity

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress towards its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its institutional purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to enact strategies to improve results of student learning.

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

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

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

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

## Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	1.67	2.68
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	1.83	2.68
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	3.00	2.90
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	2.33	2.65

## Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	3.17	2.97
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	4.00	2.96
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	3.50	3.17
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	3.00	3.03
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	2.67	2.74



Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	2.00	2.70

## Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

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

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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.42
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00	3.03

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Develop, implement and evaluate formalized processes, practices and procedures to review, revise and communicate the system's purpose for student success that is data driven, engages all stakeholder groups and requires all school purpose statements to align with the system's purpose.

(Indicator 1.1, Indicator 1.2)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 1.1

#### Evidence and Rationale

Review of artifacts and interviews found limited evidence of formalized, systemic and systematic processes and practices to ensure the vision and mission of the system are reviewed and revised. A process describing the development of statements to guide all decisions was not evident. Presentations by the system leadership to the Team identified the need to develop policies and practices to guide future revisions of the vision and mission. The development of the 2013-17 Strategic Plan included limited stakeholder involvement. The AdvancED Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic results included strong approval of the mission of the system

from all stakeholder groups. An interview with a system leader revealed the system has relied on “institutional memory” rather than written, clearly defined process to develop practices to align all initiatives of the system. One leader stated, “if it is written down, it gets done.” Policies to ensure the alignment of system and school improvement plans were not evident. Interviews with school leadership confirmed the need to build processes that are comprehensive and consistent to align the school improvements to the system plan.

Clearly defined, formalized processes and practices to review, revise and communicate a system-wide purpose ensures the system engages in a process that is inclusive and systematic. Processes and procedures to align and system continuous improvement initiatives provides direction for improving conditions that support student learning and increased organizational effectiveness.

### **Powerful Practice**

The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively as evidenced by their commitment to participation in formal professional development, adherence to policies that ensure the decisions are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, compliance with a formally adopted code of ethics and their dedication to the students in the system which enables them to function as a cohesive body.

(Indicator 2.2)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.2

#### Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with all stakeholder groups revealed an appreciation of the support, guidance and leadership provided the school board. Among the documents reviewed by the Team were a draft copy of the Board Procedure Manual, a copy of the Board of Education Survey data and examples from the North Carolina School Board Association participation in professional development. Because of budget constraints, the board elected not to fund their professional learning activities, but rather to finance the training personally. One board member stated, “it is important for us to model our expectation that everyone be involved in professional development.” System and school leadership affirmed the board’s adherence to their clearly defined roles and responsibilities. A board member said, “We support the administration. They know the culture of the schools and we listen to them. Our main focus is how decisions will impact the learning of our students.” All school board members visit schools on a regular schedule to honor a teacher identified by the school’s leadership and to participate in a fishbowl experience for feedback from the leadership and staff at each school. Interviews confirmed that the board functions effectively, is highly regarded by the community and uses the vision and mission of the system as a guide in all decision making.

Responsible and effective governance through adherence to established policies and practices ensures leadership decisions and actions are focused on student learning and a shared vision of student and organizational success.



# Resource Utilization

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

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

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in the more than 32,000 institutions in the AdvancED Network that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff members to improve their effectiveness and ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

## Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	2.83	2.87
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	2.50	2.87
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.00	3.06
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	2.17	2.76

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	2.67	2.73
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.67	2.72
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.00	2.58
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	2.00	2.60

## Findings

### Opportunity For Improvement

Design, implement and evaluate systemic and systematic processes and practices to meet the social, physical, emotional and career planning needs of each student.

(Indicator 4.7, Indicator 4.8)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.7

#### Evidence and Rationale

Review of artifacts and interviews with school and system personnel indicated that the system provides a plethora of services to meet the needs of students; however, a systemic and systematic program to identify and provide resources to meet the social, physical, emotional and educational needs of all students was not evident to the Team. Programs such as Backpack Blessings, extensive extracurricular activities, memorandums of agreement with local agencies and school based counseling services provided support for students. Interviews with system and school leadership and staff identified the need to provide a comprehensive, coordinated program of support for students to meet the challenges presented by the students in the system. Each school had a nurse who met the immediate health needs of students. Policies and practices to ensure all various services for students were evaluated for effectiveness had not been developed. Interviews with parents, students and staff suggested to the Team a clearly defined, systemic program to identify the needs of students and a complete list of programs and resources designed to meet the physical, social, emotional and educational needs of students was not evident. Measures of program effectiveness to evaluate the programs were not identified.

When the social, emotional and physical needs of students are met, learning and achievement are enhanced. Sound educational and career planning for all students is an essential component of student success. The evaluation of programs allows the system to monitor and adjust practices to effectively meet the needs of all

students.

# Conclusion

Serving approximately 14, 071 students in grades K-3 through grade 12, the Craven County Schools in New Bern, North Carolina is rich in history and family values. The system is comprised of three distinct attendance areas: Havelock, New Bern and West Craven. A strong military presence is evident in the Havelock area which is near a United States Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. The superintendent as well as other system leaders have been hired or have new leadership assignments this year. The infusion of energy and a renewed focus on excellence was evident to the Team.

The External Review Team noted three themes supportive of student success and organizational effectiveness for the Craven County Schools. Team members saw and heard evidence of a strong commitment to excellence and collaboration. During interviews, the Team heard statements such as "all the staff is on the same page" and "All of our decisions consider what will be best for the students." One stakeholder commented "We are the Walmart of school choice. We have a high-quality product for a cheap price." A system leader stated that "Rigor is critical, mastery of the standards, not just movement of the needle is our goal. We want to raise our standard to rigorous." Parents, staff and leadership all expressed belief in the system's leadership ability to initiate and support programs to make the shared vision of "Today's Learners...Tomorrow's Leaders" a reality for all students.

A second theme related to student success was the strong leadership provided by the school board and system leadership. The board intentionally modeled the behaviors it expected of all staff. Members pursued professional learning opportunities, often at personal expense, to ensure their training was current and relevant. The best interests of the student were at the forefront of all decision-making. The board had formalized processes, practices and procedures to guide all actions and decisions. In addition, the system leadership maintained high standards regarding decisions. Transparency in all issues was of paramount importance. The Team heard verbal evidence through interviews and saw written evidence through documents that the system was committed to serving the students and the community at large by providing the best educational program possible. The vision and mission directed the actions of the system leadership. Each cabinet meeting began with members responding to the question, "How did we see our vision in action this week". Maintaining an intentional focus on providing students, families and the community with creative and innovative programs was the goal of all leadership. Interviews with system leadership and community members indicated the collaboration and communication with the local county government officials was a key factor in securing the resources necessary to offer programs and services to prepare students for their futures.

Another theme identified by the Team that contributed to student success and organizational effectiveness was the focus on strong community connections and sense of family that was pervasive throughout the system. The Team heard through interviews with all stakeholder groups that this system engages the community in the initiatives of the system. The outreach services to the military and military families eased the transitions for students enrolling in the Craven County schools. The system had secured numerous grants aligned with the system's purpose to expand opportunities for students. Community organizations provided support and assistance in a myriad of ways to assist the students and staff in the system. When asked to describe the system in one word, parents, teachers, students, staff and community members used the word "family" more

frequently than any other descriptor.

The overarching challenge for the system leadership was the need to develop formalized, systemic and systematic processes and practices to guide continuous improvement efforts. Through interviews and a review of evidence, the Team acknowledged five challenges of the system. Although the system had a clear vision and mission, a process to guide the review and revision of the purpose statements was not evident. A comprehensive, formalized process to ensure the purpose statements of all schools were aligned to the system's purpose had not been developed. The Team's rating for Indicator 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" was 2.0, below the AEN average. Although the system and all the schools had purpose statements, stakeholder engagement in their development was limited and a formalized process to guide the development was not apparent. Interviews with system leaders suggested that previous statements had been reviewed and revised "as needed", but formalized processes and practices to inform the development were not evident. The system leadership had relied on "institutional memory" rather than written protocols to direct the review and revision of existing statements.

A second challenge of the system was the systematic, vertical and horizontal alignment of the curriculum. The rating for Indicator 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" was 2.0. Interviews with school leadership teams and system leadership suggested vertical alignment of the curriculum to provide a seamless K-12 program of study had not been done. Implementation of the Multi-Tiered Student Support (MTSS) provided a framework for total school improvement, but full integration of the framework was in the beginning phase. Successful implementation of the MTSS program required that the curriculum, instructional practice and assessment were systematically aligned. Interviews with school teams suggested that horizontal alignment had begun in some grades and among some schools, but the practice was not systemic. The Team conducted observations in 75 classrooms representing all levels and subject areas. Many activities observed by the Team were delivered via whole group instruction or provided by group work requiring students to move from group-to-group targeting parallel levels of difficulty. The Team's average rating of 2.42 for the eleot Indicator A1, "Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs" reflected the need for greater differentiation of instruction based on identified needs of students.

A third challenge of the system was that of systematically utilizing a process to formally and consistently monitor instructional practice to ensure alignment with the system's purpose and direction. Although the system rated Indicator 3.4 a 3.0, the Team learned from staff and faculty interviews of the need for a systemic and systematic process that monitored and evaluated instruction to determine the level of rigor delivered by the instructional staff. The Team reviewed the 5x5 format of system-wide observations which was a part of the Learning Focus model. Observations results from the 5x5 were intended to provide data for school and system leaders to guide discussions about the sustainability of the Learning Focused framework. Although a system-wide form had been designed to monitor instruction, interviews with school leadership teams and staff suggested the use of the form was inconsistent and the data were not used at all schools to inform curriculum and instruction. Walk-through observations were an expectation of the system leadership and evidence of both



leadership and peer observations were reviewed. Modifications in instructional practice resulting from the walk-through data were limited. The Team's average rating for the eleot Indicator A1, "Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs" was 2.42 which reflected the need for greater differentiation of instruction based on identified needs of students. Additionally, the Team's rating of 2.73 for Indicator B5, "Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking..." suggested that instructional practice may not be systematically aligned to the system's purpose to prepare all students to be college and career ready.

The development of a system-wide professional learning plan was identified as a fourth challenge. The Team reviewed the Learning Focus model which had been implemented to provide all staff with a common framework for the improvement of instruction. The common lesson plan used by staff was designed to serve as the foundation of improved instructional practice. The MTSS model provided a systemic means of improving student learning. These two identified models, were the anchors of professional learning, however the Team noted through interviews, a comprehensive, written system-wide professional learning plan was not evident. Interviews with faculty indicated professional learning activities did not give the assistance and direction necessary to sustain the initiatives embraced by the system. Teachers indicated many professional learning opportunities were optional and as a result training across the system was inconsistent.

Finally, a fifth challenge identified by the Team was the development of evaluation criteria for all services and programs designed to meet the social, physical, emotional, educational and career planning needs of the students. The Team reviewed numerous programs designed to meet the needs of students; however, evidence of a systematic process to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs was not evident. Clearly defined processes to identify the social and emotional needs of students were not apparent to the Team. The system provided access to nurses in all schools to meet the physical needs, counselors to provide educational and career counseling and engaged outside agencies and resources to meet student needs beyond the scope and expertise of system personnel, but a coordinated, comprehensive method to identify student needs and to evaluate the impact of the services on student learning had not been developed.

Attention to vertically and horizontally aligning the curriculum, promoting instructional practices that address the learning needs of students, developing evaluation criteria for all programs and services designed to meet the unique needs of students and designing a comprehensive professional learning plan to build capacity of all staff serves a strong basis for future actions and continuous improvement.

The Improvement Priorities are designed to provide direction that will result in an intentional focus on the system's vision of "Today's Learners...Tomorrow's Leaders." The system and school leadership have a clear focus on providing challenging educational experiences for the students in Craven County. The results from the Stakeholder Feedback indicated internal and external stakeholders have trust and confidence in the system. The parents expressed their support of the system and recognized the need to continually improve to enable the system to provide quality educational opportunities for all students. The strong leadership of the school board and system leadership and the commitment of the entire school community to continuous improvement will enable the system to meet the challenges of preparing all students for future success.

## Improvement Priorities

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

- Design, implement and monitor a system-wide continuous program of professional learning that builds capacity among all staff and is aligned to the system's purpose and direction.
- Develop, implement and evaluate a relevant, rigorous, vertically and horizontally aligned K-12 curriculum that ensures high expectations for all students to become college, career and citizenship ready.
- Develop, implement and evaluate a systemic and systematic process to formally and consistently monitor instructional practice with fidelity to ensure alignment with the system's purpose and direction to improve student learning.
- Develop, implement and evaluate formalized processes, practices and procedures to review, revise and communicate the system's purpose for student success that is data driven, engages all stakeholder groups and requires all school purpose statements to align with the system's purpose.

# Accreditation Recommendation

## Index of Education Quality

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

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

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

	External Review IEQ Score	AdvancED Network Average
Overall Score	265.45	278.94
Teaching and Learning Impact	261.11	268.48
Leadership Capacity	284.72	293.71
Resource Utilization	247.92	286.27

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

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

# Addenda

## Individual Institution Results (Self-reported)

Institution Name	Teaching and Learning Impact	Leadership Capacity	Resource Utilization	Overall IEQ Score
Albert H. Bangert Elementary School	242.86	263.64	271.43	253.85
Arthur W. Edwards Elementary School	280.95	300.00	257.14	282.05
Ben D. Quinn Elementary School	295.24	327.27	271.43	300.00
Bridgeton Elementary School	233.33	227.27	214.29	228.21
Brinson Memorial Elementary School	271.43	263.64	271.43	269.23
Craven Early College High School	276.19	281.82	300.00	282.05
Creekside Elementary School	276.19	309.09	271.43	284.62
Early College EAST High School	252.38	327.27	257.14	274.36
Graham A. Barden Elementary School	314.29	300.00	300.00	307.69
Grover C. Fields Middle School	266.67	290.91	214.29	264.10
H. J. MacDonald Middle School	233.33	245.45	214.29	233.33
Havelock Elementary School	233.33	218.18	214.29	225.64
Havelock High School	242.86	290.91	200.00	248.72
Havelock Middle School	280.95	300.00	271.43	284.62
J. T. Barber Elementary School	209.52	200.00	200.00	205.13
James W. Smith Elementary School	271.43	318.18	271.43	284.62
New Bern High School	257.14	254.55	285.71	261.54
Oaks Road Elementary School	233.33	281.82	300.00	258.97
Roger R. Bell Elementary School	252.38	300.00	257.14	266.67
Trent Park Elementary School	247.62	254.55	285.71	256.41
Tucker Creek Middle School	290.48	263.64	285.71	282.05

Institution Name	Teaching and Learning Impact	Leadership Capacity	Resource Utilization	Overall IEQ Score
Vanceboro Farm Life Elementary School	285.71	281.82	300.00	287.18
W. Jesse Gurganus Elementary School	280.95	272.73	271.43	276.92
West Craven High School	238.10	309.09	285.71	266.67
West Craven Middle School	233.33	300.00	228.57	251.28

# Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Holly Wingard	<p>Holly Wingard has worked in both a large metropolitan school district and in a small rural district in South Carolina. After 34 years, she has retired from the school system. She has taught, served as a guidance counselor, senior counselor, testing coordinator, administrative team member, and Advanced Placement coordinator. She has served on SACS/AdvancED review teams for over 25 years, serving as a school Lead Evaluator in South Carolina and in other states. She serves as a consultant to districts preparing for AdvancED reviews. Mrs. Wingard has an undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia and an M.ED from the University of South Carolina.</p>
Mrs. Erica Fortenberry	<p>Erica Fortenberry is currently an Executive Director of Federal Programs and School Improvement for Hoke County Schools. She has been in public education for 18 years. Fortenberry served two years as an assistant principal and she taught five years in the classroom as an English Language Arts Teacher. She serve as a Middle School Principal for 10 years. This is her 1st year as an Executive Director. She was Principal of Year for her district and Region in 2011.</p> <p>Fortenberry earned her BA from the University of Southern Mississippi. She moved to North Carolina in 1998 where she began graduate school in Middle Grades Education at Fayetteville State University. After completion of her first masters, she obtained a Masters in School Administration from Fayetteville State. Currently, she is enrolled at UNC-W in the doctorate program in Education Leadership.</p>
Mrs. Mary Anne Hipp	<p>As a retired school administrator, Mary Anne Hipp currently serves as a Lead Evaluator for AdvancED and provides educational consulting services to school personnel and boards. She holds Bachelor and Master degrees in Music Education, certifications in Elementary Education and Early Childhood, and a Master +30 in Educational Leadership. She has 50 years of experience across the United States, serving as teacher, Catholic school administrator, Director of Bayou Charter School for Dyslexic Students, and Consultant for the Recovery School District of Louisiana. For the past seven years she has served as Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Ashton School in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She enjoys educational writing and has been a contributing author on several American and International educational blogs.</p> <p>Certifications:</p>
Mrs. Jill Cohen	<p>Jill Cohen has worked in multiple settings in both public and non-profit educational settings in New York, New Hampshire and since 2006 in North Carolina. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from State University of New York, a Master of Science from City University of New York, and Masters in Educational Leadership from Elizabeth City State University in NC. She is a National Board Certified Teacher. For 18 years, she has taught in the most restrictive setting for adjudicated youth as the only Life Skills Teacher in this setting for NH. Currently, Mrs. Cohen is the Director of Career Technical Education for Perquimans County Schools.</p> <p>Community Engagement: Member of the Perquimans Art League, NC Business Outreach &amp; Outcomes Taskforce</p>

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Dr. Vanessa Nelson-Reed</p>	<p>Dr. Vanessa Nelson-Reed earned her Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership Studies in 2006 from Capella University, Minneapolis, Minnesota. She serves in several adjunct faculty positions both online and onsite where she’s taught courses in special education, counseling and business administration. She currently serves as the Federal Program Administrator in the Federal Programs Monitoring and Support Division at North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Her subprograms include the Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program and the ESEA programs for Neglected and Delinquent Youth. She has over 25 years of experience in higher education and K-12 education administration. She has managed and monitored Federal programs for Career and Technology Education (Perkins) and special education (IDEA). In her consulting capacity, she conducts compliance visits for 21st Century Learning Center, special education, peer reviews grants for the US Department of Education, and writes grants. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from the University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC and a Master’s Degree in Counselor Education from Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. She resides in Irmo, SC with her husband Larry and their daughter Lauren.</p>
<p>Mrs. Rebekka Powers</p>	<p>Rebekka Powers is currently the Data Integration Specialist for Gaston County Schools. She works with elementary, middle and high schools by providing data support to help drive PLC's and instructional decision making. She also provides district and school level data to district administrators to help with program evaluation and decision making. Prior to this position, she was a high school Assistant Principal and a middle school ELA teacher.</p>
<p>Mr. Buddy Thomas</p>	<p>Name: Buddy Thomas</p> <p>List current position and years in that position Present: Principal, George Jenkins High School, 2001-Present.</p> <p>Education: Glenville State College, A.B., Education, West Virginia University, Masters, Educational Leadership, Marshall University and University South Florida Masters Plus 33 hours.</p> <p>Educational Accomplishments: 44 years of experience which includes being the Principal at George Jenkins High School, being a Board Member or Officer serving on various District Committees and State Committees in Florida and West Virginia, and serving on AdvancED(SASCS/CASI) evaluation teams at the school and district levels for over 13 years.</p> <p>List any community involvement activities or community positions held. Member of the Citrus Center Kiwanis Club, member of the Lakeland Civic Center Task Force, member of the Polk Museum of Arts, member of FASA, member of NASSP, member of ASCD,member of ASBA.</p>

## Next Steps

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



## About AdvancED

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

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

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

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