# Accreditation Report

# Transylvania County Schools

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# Executive Summary

# Introduction

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

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

# Description of the School System

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

Nestled in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina, Transylvania County is referred to as the "Land of the Waterfalls" as beautiful waterfalls and lush forests make our county a place known for its natural beauty. Transylvania County Schools serves approximately 3,525 students in kindergarten programs through grade twelve at nine schools across the district.
Transylvania County Schools is governed by a non-partisan elected Board of Education that includes five at-large members from the Transylvania County community. The Board annually elects a chair and vice-chair to oversee Board meetings and activities. The Board has established a comprehensive policy manual to guide the system's operation of schools, services, and administrative programs. The Superintendent serves as the system's chief administrative officer and leads a small central office staff of 9 administrators.

The school system's student profile is reflective of the broader community's ethnic and racial composition. Approximately 90% of the district's students are white, while approximately 10% of the district's students represent ethnic minorities. African-American students represent the greatest percentage of students in the ethnic minority. While students of Hispanic descent represent a small portion of the total student population, they represent the fastest-growing ethnic minority population in the school system.

Transylvania County's community has suffered economically for several recent years as a result of its loss of the manufacturing industry that once represented the largest employment sector within the local economy. The recent, prolonged economic recession affecting the state and nation has further magnified the impact of local economic changes that find more and more residents of the county struggling to find work and secure an income sufficient to support their families. Transylvania County Schools has observed an unprecedented increase in the number of students participating in the National School Lunch Program in recent years. At present, nearly 60% of the district's students receive free- or reduced-priced meals in school cafeterias, while some individual schools have participation rates approaching 70%.

Local, state, and national economic conditions have likewise challenged the school district's ability to secure and provide adequate financial and capital resources to provide educational programs and services to the students it serves. At the same time, the district is fortunate to enjoy many strengths and assets in its ongoing pursuit of continuous improvement and quality results for all students. Among them are a highly qualified, highly dedicated corps of educators; a talented and capable student body; and, a support system of caring and devoted parents, community members, and partner organizations that help to ensure the success of our students. As a result, students across the district have posted strong records of academic achievement under state and federal accountability programs.

# System's Purpose

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

The school system's vision is serving as our guide in planning for the future. Our system's vision is that Transylvania County Schools provides a bright and promising future for its students; both recruits and retains a professional, caring, and talented workforce; engages with parents, families and the community at large; drives economic development and opportunity for our citizens; and exists as the central point of pride in our community. The mission of Transylvania County Schools is to prepare students to become caring and productive citizens in an ever-changing society through the shared responsibility of students, parents, educators, and the community.

Aligned with that vision and mission, as a district we formally adopted a motto in October 2014 that had long been used informally in our system. "Teaching Everyone Takes Everyone" has become a tag line and a motto that reflects our belief that a shared responsibility exists in order to care for and provide for the children of our community.

In addition to our vision, mission and motto; the Board of Education formally adopted three major goals and a set of values in October 2014 to guide the future strategic planning for the school system. Our system will take the next several months developing the objectives, action strategies, and metrics that we will use over the next five years to measure our success and progress. The district's goals and values are outlined below.

Goals:

1. Every Transylvania County Schools student has a personalized education graduating from high school prepared for work, higher education, and citizenship.
2. Every Transylvania County Schools student, every day has excellent educators.
3. Every Transylvania County Schools student is healthy, safe, and responsible.

Values:

-All children can learn; however, they learn differently, and we must value and understand those differences.

-High expectations will result in high achievement.

-Through the shared responsibility of students, teachers, parents, and community, we can reach our goals.

-Children are our most important resource.

-All children deserve a safe, comfortable, attractive, and inviting atmosphere that fosters learning.

-All educators, students, and parents deserve respect.

-Minds and hearts are the focus of education.

# Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

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

Transylvania County Schools has a celebrated tradition of excellence. Education is valued in the community and broadly supported by stakeholders. In an environment of continuous improvement, it is important to celebrate successes observed, but it is equally important to identify potential areas for improvement. The list below provides a list of some of the system's notable achievements or strengths observed in the last several years followed by a list of areas for improvement. These items were generated in focus group meetings with stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, administrators, non-parents, and school board members.

Notable Achievements and Strengths:

-High school graduation rates at or above state average; great strides in lowering the dropout rate

-Successful implementation of a 1:1 computer technology program with all students in grades 4-12 (using Google Chromebook device for grades 6-12 and LearnPads for elementary students)

-TIME Science Honors Research Program at Brevard High as a national model (state, national, and international awards)

-Continued support and expansion of extracurricular activities and fine arts programming during tough budget times

-Success of alternative school as a "school of alternatives" rather than being a "poor behavior" school

-Community involvement as evidenced by volunteer hours in schools

-Strong collaboration with Transylvania County Sheriff's Office providing a full-time School Resource Officer in each school

-Excellent safety and efficiency ratings for school transportation services

-Credentialing programs offered through Career-Technical Education (Certified Nurse Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Microsoft IT Academy, and so on)

-Dual enrollment opportunities for high school students with Blue Ridge Community College and Brevard College

-High average daily attendance rate in schools

-Electronic access control installation at each school to improve safety and security

-High percentage of students who participate in extracurricular activities including arts, athletics and clubs

-Child Nutrition programs including universal/free breakfast, summer feeding programs for the community, and a supper program at the alternative school

-Celebrated 50 years of school integration in 2013 and also highlighted the first integrated football team in North Carolina

-History of Academic Excellence

-Positive and supportive military culture; New Marine Corps JROTC to be established in Fall 2015 at Brevard High

-Local history is cherished

-Participation in state level competitions (ie. science fair, athletics, FHA, science fairs, and so on)

-Two Title I "Reward" schools recognized for closing achievement gap

-Public Private Partnership in Turf Field installation project at Brevard High and Track Construction at Brevard College

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

-Continue to implement programs & utilize resources of Blue Ridge Community College & Brevard College

-Improve the relationship with county commissioners

-Assist Transylvania County in showcasing Education in our county (Brevard College, Blue Ridge Community College & Transylvania County Schools)

-Opportunities for different & more competitive education possibilities (STEM, outdoor/arts education, outdoor/experiential curriculum)

-Market TCS better internally and externally

-Develop/Implement communications plan with stakeholder input

-Implement TIME science research program in all middle and high schools

-Continue to include community resources in schools

-Mental / Social Health support for students and families

-Strive to place a nurse in each school to support student health needs

-Aging school facilities, need for renovations and modernization

-Professional Development plan aligned with district needs and strategic plan

-Efforts to improve morale and school culture

-Curriculum / Instructional design

-Formative Assessment & use of data by Professional Learning Communities to improve student achievement

-Increase student achievement, especially in early literacy skills

-Community / Parental Involvement

-Partnerships with local governments & industry

-Refine and improve the School Improvement Planning process for schools

-Need vertical and curriculum alignment K-12

-Need benchmark assessments for high school

-Improve student transitions for 5th-6th grade and 8th-9th grade

-Improve collaboration of support staff (TA's, AIG, SpEd) with school goals

-Improve graduation rates and lower the dropout rate

-Refine and streamline intervention and alternative school services to support lowering dropout rate and lower suspension rate

# Additional Information

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

Transylvania County Schools has long served the community well. Scores of successful children have graduated from our high schools prepared to meet the challenges that lay ahead for them in life. Over the past several years our system has weathered trying economic times, changing demographics and a substantial increase in poverty in our community. Not only must our system cope with the changing demands of our community and the higher standards of today's curriculum but we must also position ourselves as a point of pride for our community and the very best choice for children and families in today's environment of school choice. We believe that as we continue to focus on our students' success and care while always striving to improve that we will be a positive force in this community as well as a very bright spot in an uncertain future.

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Transylvania County Schools

# Self Assessment

# Introduction

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

# Purpose and Direction

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

Overall Rating:  3.25

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success. | The system's process for review, revision, and communication of the purpose statement is documented.  The process is formalized and implemented on a regular schedule.  The process includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups.  The purpose statement focuses on student success. | •District purpose statements - past and present<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders<br><br>•Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook)<br><br>•Minutes from meetings related to development of the district's purpose and direction<br><br>•Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.2 | The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success. | System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process for review, revision, and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor and maintain data about each school and provide feedback for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel. | •Survey results<br><br>•Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements<br><br>•Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement<br><br>•Examples of written stakeholder communications or marketing materials that portray the school purpose and direction | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.3 | The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills. | Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is clearly evident in documentation and decision making. This commitment is always reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented in a measurable way so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a strong commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership and staff hold one another accountable to high expectations for professional practice. | •Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Statements or documents about ethical and professional practices<br><br>•Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs<br><br>•Statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning<br><br>•The district strategic plan | Level 4 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.4 | Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning. | Leaders at all levels of the system implement a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. All stakeholder groups are engaged in the process. Personnel maintain a profile with current and comprehensive data on student, school, and system performance. The profile contains analyses of data used to identify goals for the improvement of conditions that support student learning and that are aligned with the system's purpose. Improvement goals have measurable performance targets. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Leaders hold all personnel accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. The process is reviewed and evaluated. Documentation that the process yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available and communicated to stakeholders. | •Examples of schools continuous improvement plans<br><br>•District Quality Assurance Review plans that document two-way communication on district and school effectiveness and learning, thinking, and life skills<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs<br><br>•Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings<br><br>•The district data profile<br><br>•The district strategic plan | Level 3 |

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

The strengths noted are centered around efficacy in that we believe we can make changes and make improvements in our school system. Further, collaboration is seen as critical in making improvements and moving our system forward. The district's leadership is focused on the mission and vision and has begun a long and deliberate process to build a new strategic plan over the course of the next year. The Board of Education re-affirmed the district's mission statement and aligned district goals to the recently revised State Board of Education Strategic

Plan in October 2014.

We are currently working to develop a district communications plan that focuses both on internal and external stakeholders. This critical piece of our work will not only help us garner more support from external sources but also should help build morale and momentum among staff. Additionally, we hope that our work in this area gives school stakeholders a greater awareness of the purpose and direction of our school system and helps them feel connected to the major goals and aims of our district.

# Governance and Leadership

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

Overall Rating: 3.0

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools. | Policies and practices support the system's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices promote conditions that support student learning, effective instruction, and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices regarding professional growth of all staff. Policies and practices provide requirements, direction for, and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system. | •Student handbooks<br><br>•Governing body policies, procedures, and practices<br><br>•Staff handbooks<br><br>•Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions<br><br>•School handbooks | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.2 | The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively. | The governing body has a process to ensure that its decisions and actions are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a code of ethics, and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members.  The governing body complies with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations, and functions as a cohesive unit. | •Governing authority minutes relating to training<br><br>•Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest<br><br>•List of assigned staff for compliance<br><br>•Proof of legal counsel<br><br>•Assurances, certifications<br><br>•Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies<br><br>•Historical compliance data<br><br>•Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest<br><br>•Governing code of ethics | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.3 | The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively. | The governing body protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for improvement in student learning and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations of the system and its schools. The governing body maintains a distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of system and school leadership. | •Communications regarding governing authority actions<br><br>•District strategic plan<br><br>•Examples of school improvement plans<br><br>•Roles and responsibilities of school leadership<br><br>•Roles and responsibilities of district leadership<br><br>•Social media<br><br>•Survey results regarding functions of the governing authority and operations of the district<br><br>•Stakeholder input and feedback<br><br>•Agendas and minutes of meetings | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.4 | Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction. | Leaders and staff throughout the system align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. They expect all personnel to maintain high standards and to hold students to high standards in all courses of study. All leaders and staff are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system support innovation, collaboration, shared leadership, and professional growth. The culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community. | •Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan<br><br>•Professional development offerings and plans<br><br>•Examples of collaboration and shared leadership<br><br>•Examples of decisions aligned with the school's purpose statement<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans<br><br>•Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs<br><br>•Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction<br><br>•Advocacy at the state level by leadership with elected officials as well as NC Department of Public Instruction officials. | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.5 | Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction. | Leaders communicate effectively with appropriate and varied representatives from stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback and respond to stakeholders, work collaboratively on system and school improvement efforts, and provide and support meaningful leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' efforts result in measurable, active stakeholder participation, engagement in the system and its schools, a sense of community, and ownership. | •Minutes from meetings with stakeholders<br><br>•Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action<br><br>•Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys<br><br>•Survey responses<br><br>•Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan<br><br>•Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.6 | Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success. | The focus of the criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation is improving professional practice throughout the system and improving student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are regularly implemented. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice throughout the system and improve student learning. | •Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation<br><br>•Job specific criteria<br><br>•Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice throughout the system and student success noted<br><br>•Representative supervision and evaluation reports | Level 3 |

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

A major strength is a belief that policy supports the work of professionals in the district rather than unnecessarily limiting the work or being overly restrictive. The Board of Education (BOE) provides necessary support to pursue the school system's goals according to its policies. In addition, district performance is monitored to determine that the results are consistent with established goals and policies. The director of human resources oversees system policy development and facilitates a district policy committee that reviews policy revision or creation of material prior to being presented to the BOE. This committee consists of administrators, teachers, and non-certified support staff as a representative group from a variety of schools and assignments. Recently the BOE approved a contract to convert the existing board policy manual to a new policy manual based on and aligned with the North Carolina School Boards Association Policies to Lead the Schools. This thorough and systematic review of Board policies will take approximately 18 months to complete but will provide a vetted and comprehensive policy manual for the district going forward.

There exist a number of efforts to include stakeholders in decision-making and feedback processes including: Superintendent's communication council (staff), parents' council, students' council, NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey data, local stakeholder satisfaction survey data, AdvancED stakeholder survey data, and a variety of parent engagement efforts based out of schools. Further, the Board of Education goes well beyond minimum statutory requirements providing for two opportunities for public comment at each regular meeting (one

at the beginning and one at the end).  As mentioned in standard one, the district's goal of developing a system communication plan is a practical element of effectively leading the district forward in a time of great change.  Enhancing our communication efforts will serve to support positive morale among staff members in the district and to rally all stakeholders to the mission and goals of the district.

Additionally, the Board of Education chair requested formal training for members in January 2015 (after two new members began terms in December) to orient new members and re-orient continuing members on the role and responsibilities of BOE members.  This training will be provided by the Board of Education attorney.

# Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Overall Rating:  3.08

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|-----------|----------------------|----------|----------|--------|
| 3.1 | The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level. | Curriculum and learning experiences in each course/class provide all students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.  There is some evidence to indicate curriculum and learning experiences prepare students for success at the next level. Like courses/classes have equivalent learning expectations across the system. Teachers in all schools individualize some learning activities for each student in a way that supports achievement of expectations. | •Course, program, or school schedules<br><br>•Student work across courses or programs<br><br>•Course or program descriptions<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Lesson plans<br><br>•Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices<br><br>•Posted learning objectives<br><br>•Enrollment patterns for various courses and programs<br><br>•Descriptions of instructional techniques<br><br>•Other Evidence: iReady, iXL, "I Can" statements, Pacing Guides, Common Assessments K-5, Academic Coaching, Study Island (K-5), Mastery Connect (6-8), AIG, Leveled Groups, Accelerated Math, Data Walls (Elementary), and HS CTE programs | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.2 | Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice. | Using data from student assessments and an examination of professional practice, system and school personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose.  There is a process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction, and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level. The continuous improvement process ensures that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. | •Curriculum guides<br><br>•Common assessments<br><br>•Standards-based report cards<br><br>•Surveys results<br><br>•Program descriptions<br><br>•Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices<br><br>•Curriculum writing process<br><br>•Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps<br><br>•Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum<br><br>•Other Evidence: Data Walls, Reading 3-D, Summer Alignment Committee (K-5), Walk-Through Forms | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.3 | Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations. | Teachers throughout the district plan and use instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills. Teachers personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of students when necessary. Teachers use instructional strategies that require students to apply knowledge and skills, integrate content and skills with other disciplines, and use technologies as instructional resources and learning tools. | •Authentic assessments<br><br>•Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource<br><br>•Findings from supervisor formal and informal observations<br><br>•Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool<br><br>•Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge<br><br>•Surveys results<br><br>•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs<br><br>•Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices<br><br>•Interdisciplinary projects<br><br>•Other Evidence: LearnPads (Elementary)/Chromebook (6-12), Moodle courses, Co-Teaching/Inclusion, m-Class passage (K-5), Gradpoint (9-12), Differentiated instruction, Guided reading, 90-minute reading blocks (K-5), Mastery Connect (6-8), and iReady | Level 3 |

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| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.4 | System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success. | System and school leaders formally and consistently monitor instructional practices through supervision and evaluation procedures to ensure that they 1) are aligned with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning, 2) are teaching the approved curriculum, 3) are directly engaged with all students in the oversight of their learning, and 4) use content-specific standards of professional practice. | •Curriculum maps<br><br>•Supervision and evaluation procedures<br><br>•Documentation of collection of lesson plans, grade books, or other data record systems<br><br>•Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions<br><br>•Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices<br><br>•Surveys results<br><br>•Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process<br><br>•Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs<br><br>•Other Evidence: Mentors of Beginning Teachers, PLC/Grade Level Meetings, Walk-Throughs, Teacher Evaluation Timelines, and New Teacher Induction & Support Programs | Level 3 |

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| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.5 | The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels. | All system staff participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both informally and formally. Collaboration often occurs across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions. Staff members have been trained to implement a formal process that promotes discussion about student learning and the conditions that support student learning. Learning, using, and discussing the results of inquiry practices such as action research, the examination of student work, reflection, study teams, and peer coaching occur regularly among most system personnel. System personnel indicate that collaboration causes improvement results in instructional practice, system effectiveness, and student performance. | •Common language, protocols and reporting tools<br><br>•Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees<br><br>•Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Professional development funding to promote professional learning communities<br><br>•Peer coaching guidelines and procedures<br><br>•Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning<br><br>•Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration<br><br>•Examples of cross curricular or program projects, interdisciplinary instruction, and classroom action research projects<br><br>•Other Evidence: Title I programs, PLCs, and School Improvement Plans | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.6 | Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning. | All teachers throughout the system use an instructional process that informs students of learning expectations and standards of performance. Exemplars are often provided to guide and inform students. The process includes multiple measures, including formative assessments, to inform the ongoing modification of instruction and provide data for possible curriculum revision. The process provides students with specific and timely feedback about their learning. | •Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction<br><br>•Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning<br><br>•Other Evidence: Common Core State Standards and Essential Standards as a part of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, Pre/Post Tests, Pacing Guides, Data Walls, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), and TIME Science Honors Research Program (Brevard High) | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|-----------|----------------------|----------|----------|--------|
| 3.7 | Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning. | System personnel are engaged in mentoring, coaching, and induction programs that are consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching, learning, and the conditions that support learning. These programs set expectations for all system personnel and include measures of performance. | •Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs with references to district and school beliefs and values about teaching and learning<br><br>•Records of meetings and informal feedback sessions<br><br>•Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff<br><br>•Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices<br><br>•Other Evidence: School-based programs and processes that guide staff members are often tied in with the evaluation process but also are typically addressed with beginning-of-year induction activities at each cite. Additionally, the district provides orientation to new certified staff each year and programs the Beginning Teacher Support Program (a structured mentor/mentee program) for teachers in the first three years of teaching (See district Beginning Teacher Support Plan). | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.8 | The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress. | Programs that engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education are designed, implemented, and evaluated at the system level and in all schools. Families have multiple ways of staying informed of their children's learning process. | •Performance-based report cards<br><br>•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Volunteer program with variety of options for participation<br><br>•List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days<br><br>•Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress<br><br>•Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process<br><br>•Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning<br><br>•Other Evidence: ParentLink, Teacher/School Websites, PeachJar eFlyers, Volunteers, School Improvement Teams, Superintendent's Communication Councils (Parent, Student, and Teacher), Title I Parent Nights, Awards Assemblies (throughout the school year and culminating ceremonies), 6th Grade Academy (transition to 6th grade program), Freshman Year Experience (9th grade transition program), Kindergarten Orientation/Registration, as well as TCS Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites | Level 4 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.9 | The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience. | School personnel implement and participate in a structure designed and evaluated by the system that gives them long-term interaction with individual students, allowing them to build strong relationships over time with the student. All students may participate in the structure. The structure allows the school employee to gain insight into and serve as an advocate for the student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills. | •Curriculum and activities of structures for adults advocating on behalf of students<br><br>•Description of formalized structures for adults to advocate on behalf of students<br><br>•Master schedule with time for formalized structure<br><br>•Other Evidence: School counseling programs in each school are a primary connection point to establishing this advocacy, AIG/TAG Team, Intervention Specialist, High School Student Advocates, School Social Workers, School Nurses, School Resource Officers Placed in all schools, Special Education Teachers and Support Specialists (such as Speech, OT, and PT), Guidance Student Groups, Classroom Guidance at each School, Tier 2 & 3 Intervention Process, and Data Walls | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.10 | Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses. | Teachers across the system use common grading and reporting policies, processes, and procedures based on clearly defined criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These policies, processes, and procedures are implemented in all schools across grade levels and courses. Stakeholders are aware of the policies, processes, and procedures. The policies, processes, and procedures are regularly evaluated. | •Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices<br><br>•Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting<br><br>•Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs<br><br>•Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting<br><br>•Other Evidence: Teacher Websites, Parent Portal, Parent Conferences, and Standards-Based Report Cards for Grades K-2 | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.11 | All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning. | All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning that is aligned with the system's purpose and direction. Professional development is based on assessment of needs of the system. The program builds capacity among all professional and support staff. The program is systematically evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning. | •Evaluation tools for professional learning<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•District quality control procedures showing implementation plan for professional development for district and school staff<br><br>•Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs<br><br>•Other Evidence: Conversion to Electronic Registrar Online program in Fall 2013 to assist district staff in managing professional learning opportunities and progress. Additionally, the district schedules four Early Release Days each year for Teacher Professional Development. | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.12 | The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students. | System and school personnel use data to identify unique learning needs of all students at all levels of proficiency as well as other learning needs (such as second languages). System and school personnel stay current on research related to unique characteristics of learning (such as learning styles, multiple intelligences, personality type indicators) and provide or coordinate related learning support services to all students. | •Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services<br><br>•List of learning support services and student population served by such services<br><br>•Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning<br><br>•Data used to identify unique learning needs of students<br><br>•Other Evidence: TIER Process for Intervention, Middle School Tiger or Blue Devil Time for Intervention and/or Enrichment, SMART Lunch at Brevard High School (Intervention, Activities, and/or Enrichment), and Data Walls | Level 3 |

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

The school system has historically done very well in student achievement goals aligned with the state's accountability model. A major focus area now being student growth in addition to proficiency goals paired with major changes in the state accountability/testing program requires the district to re-examine student achievement and performance goals. A more systematic approach to literacy instruction in the early grades and a focus on achieving student growth goals has already begun to produce positive results. For example, all of the district's elementary and middle schools met or exceed expected growth (value-added measures) for 2013-2014.

Additional opportunities exist to develop more systematic approaches to address student growth needs at the secondary level. Currently, the district is attempting to grow and scale up changes in the early grades to the secondary level to provide a more systematic response when students are falling short of achievement goals. Additional opportunities for job-embedded learning and collaboration at all levels are the primary driver for improvement in instructional strategies and in the purposeful use of data to guide instructional improvement.

# Resources and Support Systems

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

Overall Rating: 3.12

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.1 | The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs. | Policies, processes, and procedures ensure that system and school leaders have access to, hire, place, and retain qualified professional support staff. System and school leaders systematically determine the number of personnel necessary to fill all the roles and responsibilities necessary to support purposes, educational programs, and continuous improvement throughout the district. Sustained fiscal resources are available to fund positions critical to achieve the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs. | •District budgets or financial plans for the last three years<br><br>•District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools<br><br>•School budgets or financial plans for last three years<br><br>•Assessments of staffing needs<br><br>•Documentation of highly qualified staff<br><br>•Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools<br><br>•Employment process policies and flowcharts. | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.2 | Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations. | Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are focused on supporting the purpose and direction of the system, its schools, educational programs, and system operations. Instructional time is protected in policy and practice. System and school leaders work to secure material and fiscal resources to meet the needs of all students and improve the effectiveness of the system. System and school leaders demonstrate that instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are allocated so that all students have equitable opportunities to attain challenging learning expectations. Efforts toward the continuous improvement of instruction and operations include achieving the purpose and direction of the system and its schools. | •Examples of school schedules<br><br>•Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Examples of school calendars<br><br>•Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction<br><br>•Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction | Level 3 |

# Accreditation Report

Transylvania County Schools

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|-----------|----------------------|----------|----------|--------|
| 4.3 | The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff. | System and school leaders have adopted or created clear expectations for maintaining safety, cleanliness, and a healthy environment, and have shared these definitions and expectations with stakeholders. System and school personnel as well as students are accountable for maintaining these expectations. Measures are in place that allow for continuous tracking of these conditions. Improvement plans are developed and implemented by appropriate personnel as necessary to improve these conditions. Results of improvement efforts are evaluated. | •District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments<br><br>•Example systems for school maintenance requests<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements<br><br>•Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments<br><br>•Example maintenance schedules for schools<br><br>•School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes<br><br>•Example school records of depreciation of equipment<br><br>•District Capital Outlay Plan, Capital Outlay Budget, Lottery Funds Budget, and Local Current Expense Budget. | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|-----------|----------------------|----------|----------|--------|
| 4.4 | The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system. | The system has policies and procedures for strategic resource management. The system employs a long-range strategic planning process in the areas of budget, facilities, and other strategic system components. The strategic planning process is evaluated for effectiveness, and improvement plans related to the process are developed and implemented when necessary. Strategic plans are implemented with fidelity by the governing body, and system leaders and have built-in measures used to monitor implementation and completion. | •District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems<br><br>•District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities, learning environments<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments<br><br>•Current facility master plan, Board of Education decision (November 2014) to commission a long-range facility master plan study, and BOE consideration of potential request to conduct a school bond referendum for school construction and renovation. | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.5 | The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system. | The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to ensure that all students, school, and system personnel have access to an exceptional collection of media and information resources to achieve the educational programs of the system and its schools. The system designs, implements, and evaluates processes to ensure highly qualified personnel are recruited, hired, and retained in sufficient numbers to assist students, school, and system personnel in learning about the tools and locations for finding and retrieving information. | •Evaluation procedures and results of education resources<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•District education delivery model intended for school implementation including media and information resources to support the education program<br><br>•Data on media and information resources available to students and staff<br><br>•Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information | Level 4 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.6 | The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs. | The system provides a modern, fully functional technology infrastructure, state-of-the-art equipment, and a highly qualified technical support staff to meet the teaching, learning, and operational needs of all stakeholders throughout the system. System and school personnel develop and administer needs assessments and use the resulting data to develop and implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, infrastructure, and equipment. | •Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model<br><br>•Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level<br><br>•Assessments to inform development of district and school technology plans<br><br>•Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness<br><br>•Examples of school-level technology plans and budgets to improve technology services and infrastructure to students and staff<br><br>•1:1 device implementation from grades 4-12. | Level 4 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.7 | The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served. | The system has a process to determine the physical, social, and emotional needs of students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of as many students as possible. System and school personnel regularly evaluate programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are sometimes designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students. | •Student assessment system for identifying student needs<br><br>•Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Examples of improvements made to education program and delivery models based on results of program effectiveness evaluations<br><br>•Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education<br><br>•List of support services available to students | Level 2 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.8 | The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students. | The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students. | •List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning<br><br>•Description of IEP process<br><br>•District quality assurance procedures that monitor program effectiveness of student support services<br><br>•Description of referral process | Level 3 |

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

The district has done well to maintain strong performance and provide appropriate student support services in the face of declining budget support and drastically increased student poverty in the last decade. Historically, Transylvania County Schools has been a very well-funded school district in the state of North Carolina. For example, the local teacher salary supplement paid to teachers and school-based administrators, and licensed instructional support staff is 8.5% of the base salary. This competes very well with other districts in the region, in fact, it is far higher than most other districts in the region.

Better coordination and a more strategic alignment of resources and support services to demonstrated needs within schools is needed. Some significant challenges lay ahead of the district as state budgets continue to decline and as the local (county) expenditure is the primary alternative for funding as state and federal dollars diminish. Further, the district's facilities are aging and many sites require extensive renovation and modernization. The Board of Education is currently working to develop a new long-range facility master plan and is considering proposing a school bond referendum. The Board has contracted with NC State University to conduct an Integrated Planning for School and Community Study to forecast enrollment trends and district needs for the upcoming decade. This study is set to be completed by June 2015.

An identified area of need is mental health services for students and families who are struggling to be successful in school. The district is currently operating day treatment programs at the elementary and middle level that involve in-school mental health services but the district wishes to improve those services. Additionally, the district needs to expand and develop mental health and other support services at the high school level where few to none exist to combat the dropout rate and to minimize student suspensions. TCS is currently exploring options and interviewing area mental health providers to attempt to address this area of need in future school years.

# Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Overall Rating:  2.8

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5.1 | The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system. | System and school personnel maintain and use a comprehensive assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures. These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system (including non-instructional divisions) performance. The comprehensive assessment system ensures consistent measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions. Most assessments are proven reliable and bias free. The comprehensive assessment system is regularly evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning. | •Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model<br><br>•Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local or school assessments on student learning and school performance<br><br>•Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness<br><br>•Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5.2 | Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning. | Systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning from multiple data sources are documented and used consistently by professional and support staff throughout the district. Data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. System and school personnel use data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. | •Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning<br><br>•List of data sources related to district effectiveness<br><br>•Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning<br><br>•List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5.3 | Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data. | Most professional and support staff members are assessed and trained in a professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data. | •Documentation of attendance and training related to data use<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data | Level 2 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5.4 | The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level. | Policies and procedures describe a process for analyzing data that determine verifiable improvement in student learning including readiness for and success at the next level. Results indicate improvement, and system and school personnel systematically use these results to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement action plans related to student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level. | •Policies and procedures specific to data use and training<br><br>•Student surveys<br><br>•Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data<br><br>•Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans<br><br>•Evidence of student readiness for the next level<br><br>•Evidence of student growth<br><br>•Evidence of student success at the next level<br><br>•School Improvement Plans and associated development processes. | Level 3 |

| Indicator | Statement or Question | Response | Evidence | Rating |
|-----------|----------------------|----------|----------|--------|
| 5.5 | System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders. | System and school leaders monitor comprehensive information about student learning, system and school effectiveness, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals. Leaders regularly communicate results using multiple delivery methods and to all stakeholder groups. | •Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals<br><br>•Survey results<br><br>•Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals<br><br>•Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement<br><br>•NC School Report Card Communications | Level 3 |

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

While there are a number of areas of strength and a general focus on continuous improvement within the district, moving to more systemic reviews of data and formalized protocols to generate continued growth and change are needed.  Additional professional development at all levels to support the effective use of data in collaborative learning teams would greatly enhance instruction and reflection.  The absence and/or continual fluctuation of available trend data from the state level has impacted our ability to analyze student learning, instruction program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.  Our elementary and middle school programs have numerous processes in place to evaluate student learning and our high schools are designing benchmark assessments at this time.  Professional development focusing on data analysis has been undertaken at the elementary and middle school levels and EVAAS data is closely studied by the middle and high school staff.

# Report Summary

## Scores By Section

Section Score



| | |
|---|---|
| Purpose and Direction | 3.25 |
| Governance and Leadership | 3 |
| Teaching and Assessing for Learning | 3.08 |
| Resources and Support Systems | 3.12 |
| Using Results for Continuous Improvement | 2.8 |
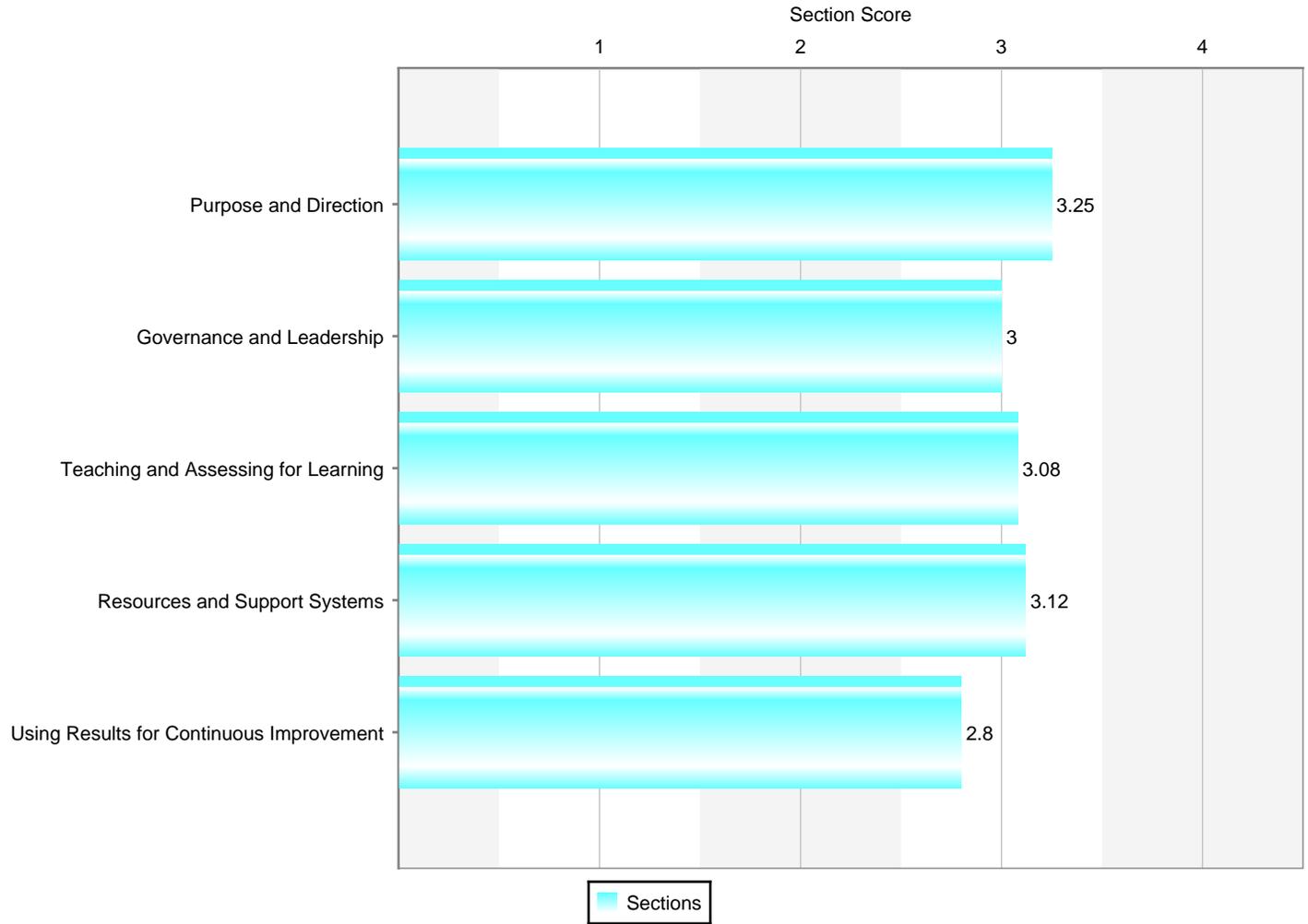
Sections

# Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

# Introduction

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

# Stakeholder Feedback Data

| Label | Assurance | Response | Comment | Attachment |
|-------|-----------|----------|---------|------------|
| 1. | Did you complete the Stakeholder Feedback Data document offline and upload below? | Yes | The stakeholder feedback data document as well as the document we circulated showing the administration timeline in April 2014 are both attached. | Stakeholder Feedback Data Document Survey Administration Timeline |

# Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.0

|  | **Statement or Question** | **Response** | **Rating** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | Questionnaire Administration | Most required AdvancED questionnaires were used by the institution to receive stakeholder feedback. The minimum response rate for each population was met (parent questionnaire: equal to or greater than 20%, student questionnaire(s): equal to or greater than 40%, staff questionnaire: equal to or greater than 60%). Questionnaires were administered with reasonable fidelity to the administrative procedures appropriate for each assessment. In most instances, the stakeholders to whom these questionnaires were administered mostly represented the populations served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations were provided for most participants. | Level 3 |

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

# Areas of Notable Achievement

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

Staff and student respondents selected Standard 1: Purpose & Direction as their highest rated or highest level of satisfaction among the five standards of quality evaluated through the survey instrument. However, parent respondents actually rated Standard 4: Resources & Support Systems as their highest level of approval or agreement. In examining the data, it is interesting to see those stakeholders in the school each day, students and staff, seem to feel very purpose-driven or purpose-supported. Further, it is a positive reflection on the district that parents indicated a high level of satisfaction with the resources provided and the support afforded to their students in the school setting.

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

The survey was only administered at one point in time in the spring of 2014 so we do not have any relevant and direct comparison. However, it is important to note that there is no area in the stakeholder survey data results that were less than a three on a Likert scale. Being that a rating of three essentially represents a neutral response, this would indicate a strong level of support from various respondents with respect to all five standards for quality.

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

Previous stakeholder survey methods and the NC Teacher Working Conditions survey data for Transylvania County Schools would also show a general high level of support from various stakeholders.

# Areas in Need of Improvement

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

Staff stakeholder respondents indicated their lowest level of satisfaction was with Standard 3: Teaching & Assessing for Learning. Student stakeholders displayed some variation based on age with early elementary students indicating that Standard 3: Teaching & Assessing for Learning was their lowest level of satisfaction while upper elementary students indicated that Standard 5: Continuous Improvement was their lowest level of satisfaction. Secondary (grades 6-12) students indicated Standard 2: Leadership & Governance as their lowest level of satisfaction. And, parent stakeholders also indicated that Standard 2: Leadership & Governance was their lowest level of approval or satisfaction.

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

The survey was only administered at one point in time in the spring of 2014 so we do not have any relevant and direct comparison. However, it is important to note that there is no area in the stakeholder survey data results that were less than a three on a Likert scale. Being that a rating of three essentially represents a neutral response, this would indicate a strong level of support from various respondents with respect to all five standards for quality.

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

The leadership of the school system is already working on curriculum and vertical alignment efforts to address the staff stakeholder perceptions around Standard 3. However, it is important to note that many state-mandated testing and/or curriculum requirements may factor in to this concern displayed in the stakeholder surveys. Further investigation is warranted to see what this data mean and if those data reveal areas where we have local control in order to address staff concerns or if more concerns are rooted in areas that are state-mandated. With state mandates, we would be able to impact less less immediate control and look more toward influencing policy while maintaining implementation fidelity. Additionally, the leadership and governance perceptions reported by secondary students and parents are an area of concern. The district's leadership not only needs to invest in professional development and support for school and district administrators, but also needs to use more effective communication in order to address this perception. Work is already underway to improve internal and external communications along with developing the first communications plan for the district.

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

Many of the findings reported echo what one can pick up from the news media and concerns expressed about public schools in North Carolina in general. It is impossible to determine how such messaging impacts our stakeholders here in this community but there must be some impact. Numerous concerning stories have appeared in the local and state media outlets in recent years expressing doubt in public schools of NC, low teacher pay in NC, and controversy around the Common Core State Standards along with the continuing concerns about the numerous state-mandated tests that our district is required to deliver. We believe that while taking steps to improve our performance in any area where improvement is warranted is valuable and expected as a part of continuous improvement that it is also critical to be more professional, systematic, and thorough in our communication efforts to highlight the many successes around us with our students, staff, and

community to improve all of our stakeholders' perceptions of Transylvania County Schools. We believe that this will foster collaboration and community within our schools and that providing good "customer service" will also engender greater parent and community support as well.

# Report Summary

## Scores By Section

Section Score

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics — 3

Sections
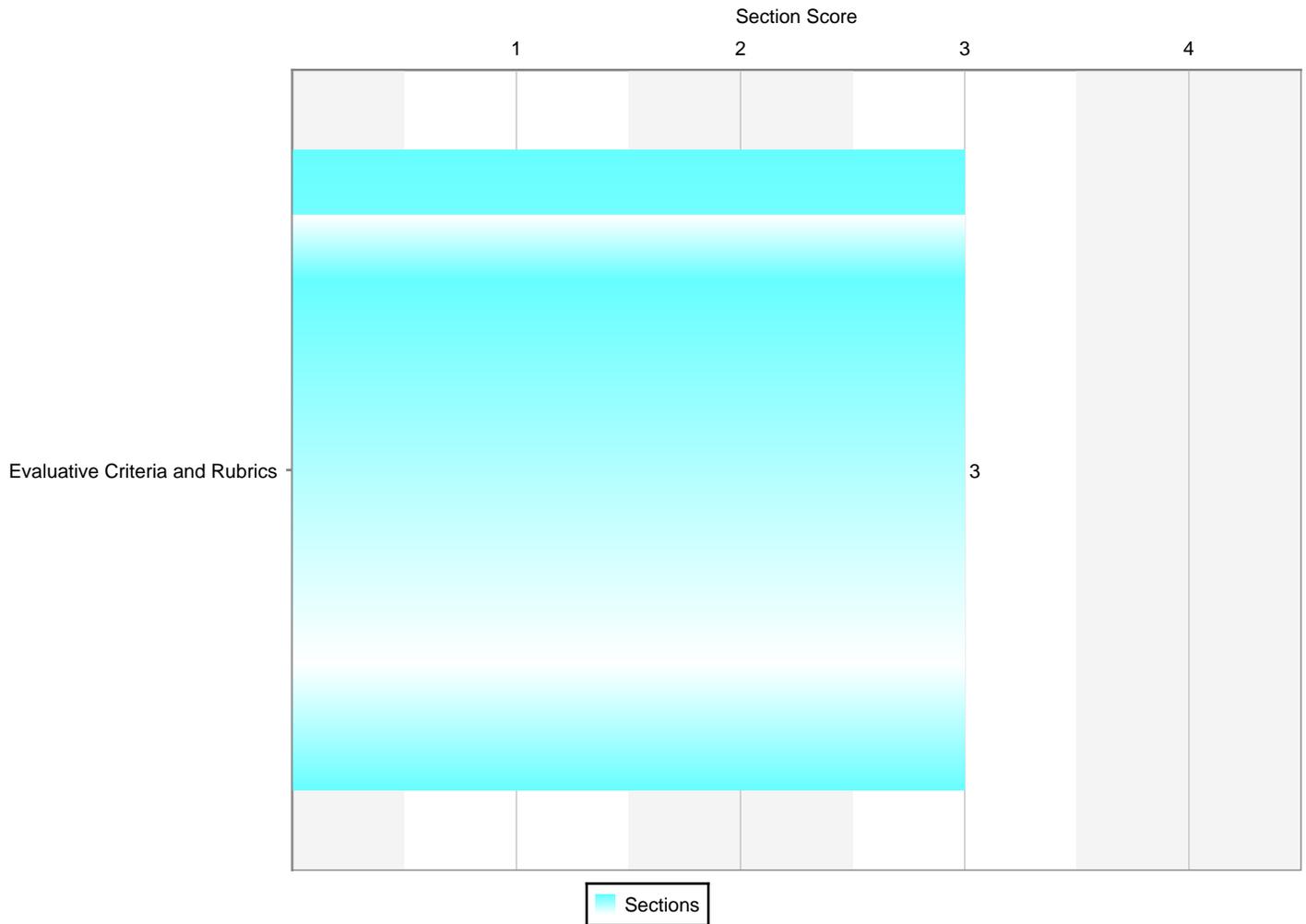
# Student Performance Diagnostic

# Introduction

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

# Student Performance Data

| Label | Assurance | Response | Comment | Attachment |
|-------|-----------|----------|---------|------------|
| 1. | Did you complete the Student Performance Data document offline and upload below? | Yes | | Student Performance Data Document |

# Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.0

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

| | **Statement or Question** | **Response** | **Rating** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2.** | Test Administration | Most of the assessments used by the institution to determine students' performances have been administered with reasonable fidelity to the administrative procedures appropriate for each assessment. In most instances, the students to whom these assessments were administered are essentially representative of the students served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations have been provided for most assessments so that valid inferences can be made about most students' status with respect to most of the institution's targeted curricular outcomes. | Level 3 |

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

| | **Statement or Question** | **Response** | **Rating** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **4.** | Equity of Learning | Evidence of student learning indicates achievement gaps exist among subpopulations of students, and these achievement gaps have noticeably declined. | Level 3 |

# Areas of Notable Achievement

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

In general, our district's EOG and EOC data show consistency in proficiency rates above the state level.  Please note, that there was a change of EOG and EOC scale score proficiency levels prior to the 2012-2013 school year, thus the data set for trend data is limited.  There is not an area of student performance that has met our district's expectations and efforts to develop local benchmark assessments are being used and created to provide additional data.

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

EOG and EOC data indicate that there has been an increase in all state tested subject areas over the last two school years.  Similarly, the state data for these tests have also demonstrated an upward trend.

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

A notable gain in EOG proficiency rates for third grade reading and third grade math.  With a net increase of 21.2 % for reading and 24.5% in math.

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

With an increase in all EOG and EOC proficiency levels over the last two years, there are gains in the majority of the subgroup proficiency levels.  EOC testing data for "students with disabilities" subgroup demonstrated the largest gain in proficiency rates with an increase from 9.3% in 2012-2013 to 32.2% in 2013-2014.

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

The following EOG subgroups have a decrease in the achievement gap:  Asian, Male, Whites, and Not Economically Disadvantaged. Similarly, the same EOC subgroups have a reduction in achievement gap.

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

The data gathered from the North Carolina state report card and from the accountability division of North Carolina Department of Public Instruction reinforce these conclusions.  Additional data for proficiency and growth is gathered at the schools with the use of local benchmark assessments and diagnostic instruments.  Our elementary and middle schools currently use Study Island, IXL Math, i-Ready and Mastery Connect to move students forward at their instructional level.  Teacher created assessments are used to assess  standards taught and learned by students.  Using data walls as a tracking device, the data drives progress and  instruction.  Teachers and administrators are

reflective in collaborative meetings looking at a combination of student data. The locally made assessments are evaluated during the summer to validate the validity and reliability of the assessments.

# Areas in Need of Improvement

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

All areas are below expected levels of performance, at this time.  Problems with data sets include, lack of more than two years of stable data (tests were renormed and state transitioned to Common Core State Standards) and change in NC Report Card data.  In addition to state testing data, there has been a recent increase in our dropout data and a decrease in four-year cohort graduation rates.

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

Negative trend data is occurring in elementary, middle and high school age students within these subgroups:  Blacks, Hispanic, Multi Racial, Economically Disadvantaged.   These students need targeted strategies to provide academic support, all show a trend toward decreasing performance.

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

For several years preceding the 2013-2014 school year Transylvania County Schools was experiencing positive trend data for dropouts and four-year cohort graduation data.  However, there was a substantial change during last school year.  The dropout rate increased from 24 dropouts during 2012-2013 school year to 41 dropouts for 2013-2014.  This is an increase of 70.8%.   The graduation rate also dropped below the state average, which is the first time since 2006 that the district rate wasn't higher than the state rate.

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

The Students with Disabilities, Limited English Proficient and Female subgroups are showing as a decreasing trend on the elementary and middle school levels. Students with Disabilities are on an upward trend, however they still fall far below the district average. Black students and Multi Racial students also are below the district average and are showing a downward trend.  Our AIG students are another subgroup that we are targeting to show growth.  This group comes to us proficient but the growth is difficult for us to achieve. We would note that as we compare data, the data sets have changed over the past few years with new standards, new assessments, new cut scores, and a new North Carolina State Report Card.

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

When looking at our subgroups, there are a few groups we see with widening gaps.  Our End of Course assessments show the following groups have widening achievement gaps: Black, Hispanic, Multi-Racial, and Economically Disadvantaged. The End of Grade assessments show a widening gap in the following areas: Females, Black, Hispanic, Multi Racial, and Economically Disadvantaged.  We are striving to close this gap through targeted intervention groups.

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

The data gathered from the North Carolina state report card and from the accountability division of North Carolina Department of Public Instruction reinforce these conclusions. Additional data for proficiency and growth is gathered at the schools with the use of local benchmark assessments and diagnostic instruments. Our elementary and middle schools currently use Study Island, IXL Math, i-Ready and Mastery Connect to move students forward at their instructional level. Teacher created assessments are used to assess standards taught and learned by students. Using data walls as a tracking device, the data drives progress and instruction. Teachers and administrators are reflective in collaborative meetings looking at a combination of student data. The locally made assessments are evaluated during the summer to validate the validity and reliability of the assessments.

# Report Summary

## Scores By Section

Section Score

|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics — 3
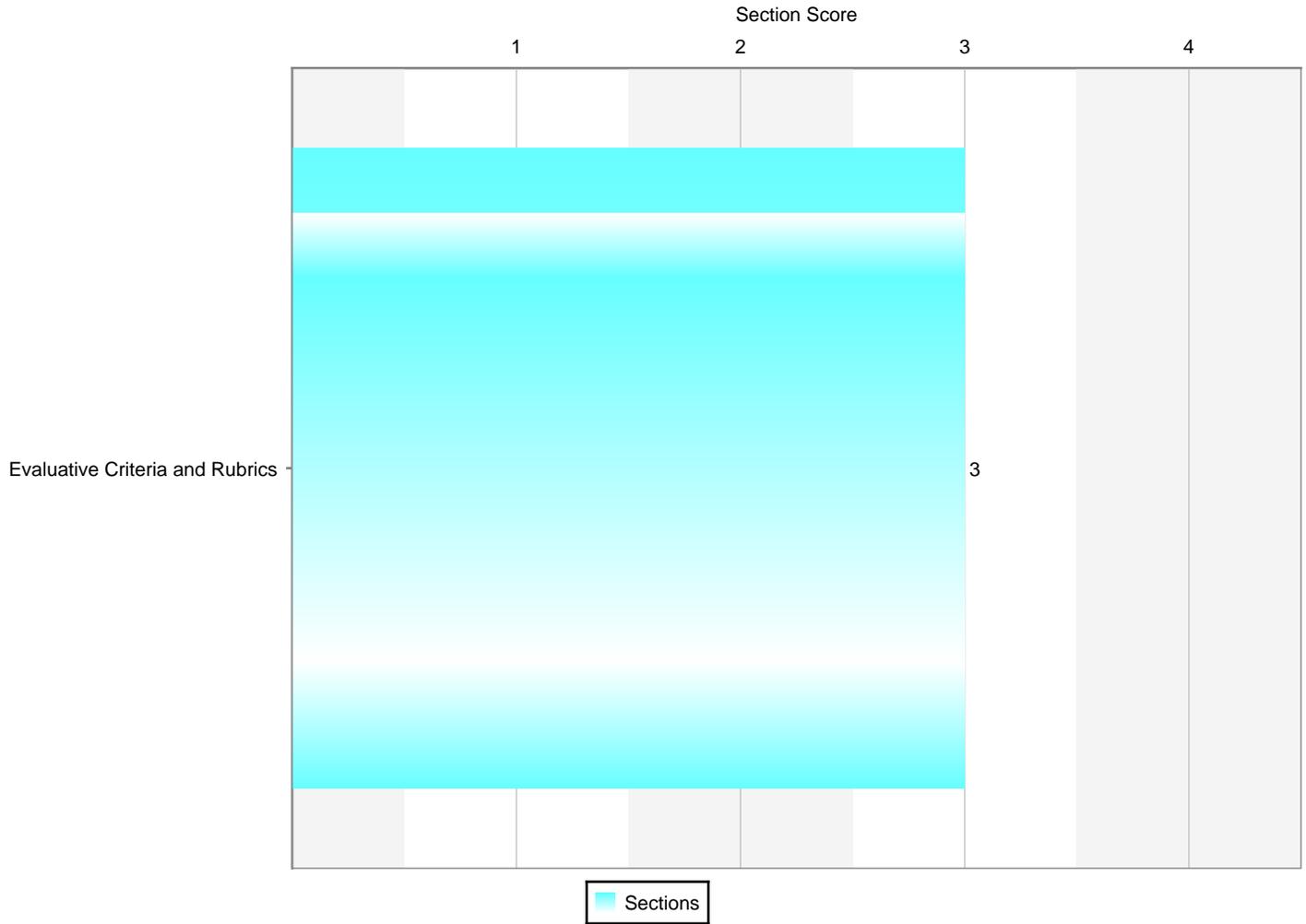
Sections

# AdvancED Assurances

# Introduction

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

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

# AdvancED Assurances

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

| Label | Assurance | Response | Comment | Attachment |
|-------|-----------|----------|---------|------------|
| 2. | The institution has reported all substantive changes in the institution that affect the scope and/or have an impact on the institution's ability to meet the AdvancED standards and policies. Such changes include, but are not limited to:<br>- Restructuring (merging, opening, or closing) of the institution or institution(s) within its jurisdiction<br>- Mission and purpose of the institution<br>- Governance structure of the institution, including changing to a charter school/school system, being the subject of a state takeover, or a change in ownership<br>- Grade levels served by the institution<br>- Staffing, including administrative and other non-teaching professionals personnel<br>- Available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance<br>- Level of funding<br>- School day or school year<br>- Establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus<br>- Student population that causes program or staffing modification(s)<br>- Available programs, including fine arts, practical arts and student activities | Yes | The Transylvania County Board of Education reaffirmed its mission statement and values statements in October 2014. Additionally, the Board adopted new goals and a new vision statement at that same meeting. A document is attached outlining the current mission, vision, goals, and values of the district. | District Mission Overview Document |

| Label | Assurance | Response | Comment | Attachment |
|-------|-----------|----------|---------|------------|
| 3. | The institution implements a written security and crisis management plan which includes emergency evacuation procedures and appropriate training for stakeholders. Attach the security and crisis management plan. (optional) | Yes | A copy of the table of contents from the district's comprehensive Emergency Response Plan is attached to show the scope of the plan. The full plan can be made available upon request by the external review team during the site visit as needed. | Emergency Plan Table of Contents |

| Label | Assurance | Response | Comment | Attachment |
|-------|-----------|----------|---------|------------|
| 4. | The institution monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system. | Yes | Internal controls are present along with a yearly external audit that is comprehensive in nature. | |

| Label | Assurance | Response | Comment | Attachment |
|-------|-----------|----------|---------|------------|
| 5. | The institution engages in a continuous improvement process and implements an improvement plan. Attach the improvement plan if the plan is not located in AdvancED's Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST). | Yes | This is done primarily through each school's actual School Improvement Plan. This process has changed greatly with several key leadership positions seeing recent turnover. We are now moving schools to using the template for School Improvement Plans provided by the NC Department of Public Instruction. | Current School Improvement Plans |

| Label | Assurance | Response | Comment | Attachment |
|-------|-----------|----------|---------|------------|
| 6. | The system verifies that all institutions within its jurisdiction meet the AdvancED  Standards for Schools.  Attach a description of the quality assurance process used to monitor the institutions. | Yes | This monitoring is primarily accomplished through the school improvement team at each school. In a two-year cycle, the school constructs their plan in year one and then provides the district with a progress report in year two. Attached is the state statute that governs school improvement plans along with a guidebook that we use provided by the state of North Carolina to implement the processes in our district. | NCGS 115C-105.27 NCDPI SIP Guide |