# Report of the
# External Review Team
# for
# Transylvania County Schools

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AdvancED®

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# Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Use of Diagnostic Tools

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

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

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

# Index of Education Quality

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

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

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

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

# Benchmark Data

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

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

# Powerful Practices

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

# Opportunities for Improvement

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

# Improvement Priorities

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

# The Review

The six-member Transylvania County School System External Review Team was composed of three in-state and three out-of-state professional educators.  Prior to the on-site review, the Team engaged in pre-training conference calls and organizational email correspondence in preparation for the team's arrival on Sunday, April 26.  Each Team member was assigned a specific accreditation standard.  The members prepared for the off-site work by completing all AdvancED training sessions, and reviewing Transylvania County Schools report, school improvement plans, and the system website.

The lead evaluator (LE) and Transylvania County coordinator had organizational phone conversations and corresponded via email throughout the planning process.  The system was very professional and cordial throughout the process, always performing in an efficient manner to ensure optimal results for the Team's visit.

The External Review Team on-site visit was conducted over a four-day period, beginning on Sunday, April 26, 2015 and culminating on Wednesday, April 29, 2015.  The Team on-site visit began with a dinner on Sunday afternoon for the six-member review Team.  This event gave the team an opportunity to become more acquainted with each other.  The first team work session was held after dinner in order for the team to discuss

the pre-work conducted prior to arriving, to discuss the self assessment report completed by the school system, to work on individual assignments, and to prepare for Day One.  On Monday, the team listened to presentations by central office staff members, interviewed stakeholders, inspected evidence and artifacts at the board office, and concluded with work session number two that evening.

On Tuesday, the Team visited eight schools, observing 62 classroom environments and interviewing principals, teachers and students.  Work session number three was held on Tuesday evening to continue deliberations and begin finalizing the Team's report.  This work consisted of analyzing eleot ratings, discussing verifiable pieces of evidence, and finalizing indicator ratings by each Team member.  The AdvancED Network (AEN) Master Worksheet provided data points for consideration of the three types of actions: Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

On Wednesday, the Team worked at the Central Office to finalize the Exit Report.  Team deliberations resulted in two Powerful Practices, four Opportunities for Improvement, and four Improvement Priorities.  The over-arching findings of the Team were in the Teaching and Learning Domain as validated by eleot ratings.  The LE and the Associate LE met with the superintendent and school system's contact person to view the Oral Exit Report presentation prior to the formal presentation to the board.  The Exit Report was presented in an open meeting of the Transylvania County School Board that afternoon.

The External Review Team agreed that the institution was prepared for the external review.  Documents provided by the system before the visit were clear and provided useful information for the team.  System and school personnel were accommodating, and those interviewed were candid in their conversations and presentations.  Additionally, the Team agreed that the system conducted an honest assessment of their ratings on the AdvancED indicators and standards.

The Transylvania County School System included numerous stakeholders to either participate in presentations or interviews.  A total of 132 system stakeholders, including four board members, twenty-four administrators, forty-nine teachers, eight support staff, five parents/community members, and forty-two students were interviewed by the External Review Team during the review process. Overall, the stakeholders interviewed were proud of the school system and shared concerns and satisfaction when interacting with the review Team.

The External Review Team appreciated the warm hospitality of the Transylvania County School's community.  The system conducted the review with integrity and transparency.  All stakeholders are to be commended for their diligence in completing the accreditation process.

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

| Stakeholder Interviewed | Number |
|---|---|
| Superintendents | 1 |
| Board Members | 4 |
| Administrators | 23 |
| Instructional Staff | 49 |
| Support Staff | 8 |
| Students | 42 |
| Parents/Community/Business Leaders | 5 |
| **Total** | **132** |

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# Results

## Teaching and Learning Impact

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning
The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level. | 2.83 | 2.69 |
| 3.2 | Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice. | 2.33 | 2.55 |
| 3.3 | Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations. | 3.00 | 2.54 |
| 3.4 | System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success. | 2.00 | 2.70 |
| 3.5 | The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels. | 2.67 | 2.57 |
| 3.6 | Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning. | 3.00 | 2.48 |
| 3.7 | Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning. | 3.00 | 2.67 |

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.8 | The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress. | 3.00 | 2.97 |
| 3.9 | The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience. | 3.00 | 2.46 |
| 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. | 3.00 | 2.57 |
| 3.11 | All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning. | 3.00 | 2.60 |
| 3.12 | The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students. | 3.00 | 2.63 |

## Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5.1 | The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system. | 3.00 | 2.67 |
| 5.2 | Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning. | 2.00 | 2.48 |
| 5.3 | Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data. | 2.00 | 2.14 |
| 5.4 | The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level. | 2.00 | 2.45 |
| 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. | 2.83 | 2.85 |

## Student Performance Diagnostic

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

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

| Evaluative Criteria | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|
| Assessment Quality | 3.00 | 3.32 |
| Test Administration | 3.00 | 3.62 |
| Equity of Learning | 3.00 | 2.52 |
| Quality of Learning | 3.00 | 3.06 |

# Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

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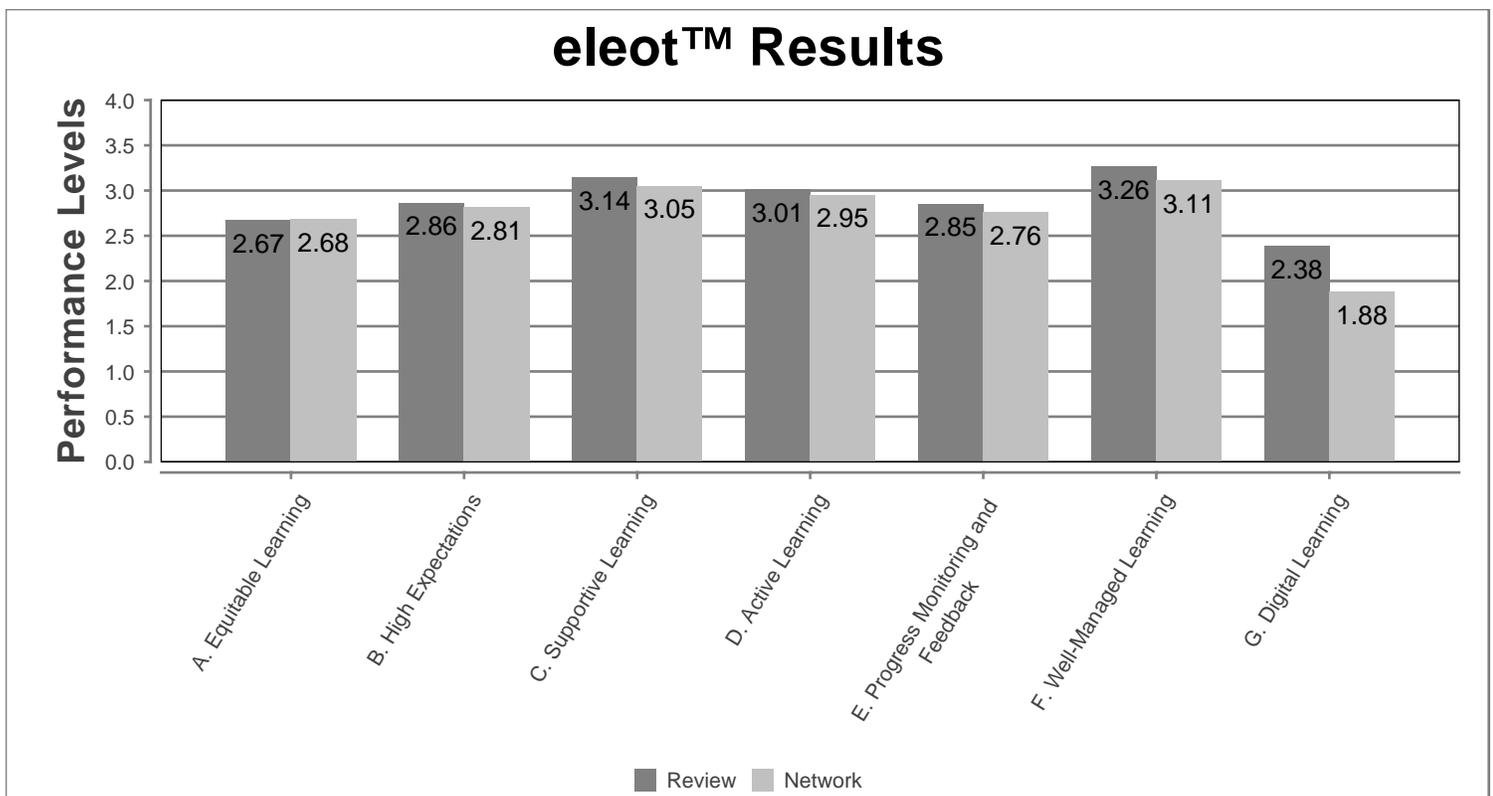


During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classroom instruction.  Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

The AdvancED Effective Learning Environment Tool™(eleot™) was used by the certified the Team members for a minimum of twenty minutes in each classroom, providing ample opportunity to assess learners in the seven eleot environments.  The review Team observed the learning environment of 62 classrooms.  These classrooms were randomly selected by the team.  All of the Team ratings were above the AEN averages, except Equitable Learning Environment.  Transylvania County Schools ratings compared to the AEN in descending order are as follows: Well-Managed Environment (3.26/3.11); Supportive Learning Environment (3.14/3.05); Active Learning Environment (3.01/2.95); High Expectations Environment (2.86/2.81); Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment (2.85/2.76); Equitable Learning Environment (2.67/2.68); and Digital Learning Environment (2.38/1.88).

The Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool (ELEOT) was used by the Team to gather data related to the classroom environment.  The following brief generalizations of the three highest rated areas and the lowest rated area are provided based on those observations.

Well-Managed Learning Environment:
Combined Team observations yielded a score of 3.26 for this environment.
Students were generally respectful, obeyed classroom rules, and interacted with the teacher and fellow students in a positive manner.  In most classrooms, Team members observed smooth and effective transitions from one instructional activity to another.

Supportive Learning Environment:
Combined Team observations yielded a score of 3.14 for this environment.
This environment was particularly strong across all grade levels.  Positive learning experiences were observed at all schools. Interviews with students by the Team revealed similar results.

Active Learning Environment:
Combined Team observations yielded a score of 3.01 for this environment.
Overall, students were actively engaged in the learning process throughout the school system.  Students were often able to make connections from content to real-life experiences. In most classrooms, students engaged in discussions with the teacher and fellow students.

Equitable Learning Environment:
Combined Team observations yielded a score of 2.67 for this environment.
Overall, classroom rules were understood and followed by most students.  Differentiated learning activities were more noticeable at the elementary and middle school levels.  The opportunity for students to learn about their own culture and others' cultures was not often observed.

As Team members shared observation results, it was clear that teaching and learning was taking place from school to school and classroom to classroom.  Based on the standards diagnostic report for the school system, Standard 3, Teaching and Assessing for Learning, was the highest category listed.  Specifically, indicators 3.3 (student engagement) and 3.6 (implementation of instructional processes) support evidence of the highest rated learning environments for the school system.

Although the system received a score of three on indicator 3.1 (equitable and challenging learning experiences) and 2.67 on Equitable Learning Environment, the system and school leaders need to continue monitoring instruction to help meet the needs of all students.

The Team ratings on eleot observations paralleled the overall rating of Standard 3.  Teaching and Assessing for Learning received the highest score on the standards diagnostic report, and the scores for six out of seven of the learning environments were higher than the AEN averages.  This indicates that the implementation of effective instructional practices are taking place throughout the school system.  The Transylvania County School System has a focus on instruction to increase student success.

## eleot™ Data Summary

| A. Equitable Learning | | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Item** | **Average** | **Description** | | **Very Evident** | **Evident** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Not Observed** |
| 1. | 2.61 | Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs | | 29.03% | 30.65% | 12.90% | 27.42% |
| 2. | 3.18 | Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support | | 38.71% | 50.00% | 1.61% | 9.68% |
| 3. | 3.06 | Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied | | 35.48% | 48.39% | 3.23% | 12.90% |
| 4. | 1.81 | Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences | | 14.52% | 12.90% | 11.29% | 61.29% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.67** | | | | | | | |

| B. High Expectations | | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Item** | **Average** | **Description** | | **Very Evident** | **Evident** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Not Observed** |
| 1. | 3.03 | Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher | | 29.03% | 53.23% | 9.68% | 8.06% |
| 2. | 3.16 | Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable | | 32.26% | 54.84% | 9.68% | 3.23% |
| 3. | 2.15 | Is provided exemplars of high quality work | | 19.35% | 19.35% | 17.74% | 43.55% |
| 4. | 3.00 | Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks | | 27.42% | 51.61% | 14.52% | 6.45% |
| 5. | 2.97 | Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing) | | 35.48% | 32.26% | 25.81% | 6.45% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.86** | | | | | | | |

| C. Supportive Learning | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 3.35 | Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive | 45.16% | 48.39% | 3.23% | 3.23% |
| 2. | 3.32 | Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning | 41.94% | 51.61% | 3.23% | 3.23% |
| 3. | 2.79 | Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback) | 27.42% | 46.77% | 3.23% | 22.58% |
| 4. | 3.27 | Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks | 40.32% | 50.00% | 6.45% | 3.23% |
| 5. | 2.94 | Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs | 29.03% | 46.77% | 12.90% | 11.29% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.14 | | | | | | |

| D. Active Learning | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 2.97 | Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students | 32.26% | 40.32% | 19.35% | 8.06% |
| 2. | 2.60 | Makes connections from content to real-life experiences | 22.58% | 40.32% | 11.29% | 25.81% |
| 3. | 3.45 | Is actively engaged in the learning activities | 53.23% | 38.71% | 8.06% | 0.00% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.01 | | | | | | |

| E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 2.92 | Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning | 27.42% | 48.39% | 12.90% | 11.29% |
| 2. | 3.02 | Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding | 33.87% | 45.16% | 9.68% | 11.29% |
| 3. | 3.05 | Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content | 32.26% | 50.00% | 8.06% | 9.68% |
| 4. | 2.56 | Understands how her/his work is assessed | 20.97% | 40.32% | 12.90% | 25.81% |
| 5. | 2.71 | Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback | 27.42% | 35.48% | 17.74% | 19.35% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.85 | | | | | | |

| F. Well-Managed Learning | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 3.53 | Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers | 58.06% | 38.71% | 1.61% | 1.61% |
| 2. | 3.44 | Follows classroom rules and works well with others | 53.23% | 41.94% | 0.00% | 4.84% |
| 3. | 3.19 | Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities | 51.61% | 32.26% | 0.00% | 16.13% |
| 4. | 2.87 | Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities | 35.48% | 37.10% | 6.45% | 20.97% |
| 5. | 3.27 | Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences | 46.77% | 43.55% | 0.00% | 9.68% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.26 | | | | | | |

| G. Digital Learning | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Item** | **Average** | **Description** | **Very Evident** | **Evident** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Not Observed** |
| 1. | 2.71 | Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning | 32.26% | 33.87% | 6.45% | 27.42% |
| 2. | 2.27 | Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning | 25.81% | 22.58% | 4.84% | 46.77% |
| 3. | 2.16 | Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning | 24.19% | 20.97% | 1.61% | 53.23% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.38** | | | | | | |

# Findings

**Improvement Priority**

Develop and implement a systemic process for vertical and horizontal articulation of the curriculum, among and between all grade levels and schools, to monitor student progress and ensure readiness for future grade levels.

(Indicators 3.5)

*Evidence and Rationale*

Artifacts and interviews indicated that some teachers are engaged in collaborative planning and summer workshops related to curriculum and instruction.  However, there was limited evidence to demonstrate a formal process for the establishment of vertical team meetings among all grade levels throughout the system.  The team also determined from a review of system artifacts and stakeholder interviews that horizontal articulation appears take place in some schools across the system.  However, based on stakeholder interviews, the team concluded that not all schools and content areas throughout the system engage in the same level of ongoing vertical alignment discussions as those occurring within grades levels.  The alignment process should include, among others, an analysis of student performance data to determine areas of strength and needed curriculum adjustment across grade levels that should result in verifiable improvements in student learning.  Vertical articulation ensures seamless curriculum alignment and that all student learning expectations are consistently addressed throughout the system.  The overall goal of vertical articulation is to increase student achievement through the evaluation of standards at each grade level.

**Improvement Priority**

Utilize student results systematically to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement plans related to student learning.

(Indicators 5.4)

*Evidence and Rationale*
Based on evidence reviewed by the External Review Team, the schools had a process for analyzing data that determined verifiable improvement in student learning to include readiness for success at the next level. Results indicated that the level of improvement was mixed.  Interviews of stakeholders also indicated that the system and school personnel do not systematically and consistently use these data to design, implement and evaluate the results of continuous improvement plans.

All school personnel should use these results to design and implement their School Improvement Plans. Effectiveness of the School Improvement Plan goals should be routinely evaluated by the use of progress monitoring data to maximize learning gains.  Efforts to effectively use results for action planning are critical to the continuous improvement process.

## Opportunity for Improvement
Monitor and systematically adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment system-wide in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practices to provide equitable and diverse learning experiences for all students.
(Indicators 3.2)

*Evidence and Rationale*
Although walk-throughs are conducted at the school level, a district protocol needs to be established for additional short walk-throughs to be implemented following professional learning sessions.  This monitoring protocol will provide valuable data regarding the implementation of learned content and skills by an instructional school/system team.  The results of the walk-throughs should be analyzed to determine the next steps.  Teachers also need more involvement in the development of curriculum documents to include pacing guides, instructional units and common assessments.  Curriculum documents should be reviewed and/or revised annually to ensure maximum student achievement.  A pacing guide is sometimes referred to as a curriculum map, scope and sequence, standards schedule, instructional calendar, or road map.  It is specific to a particular content area and level and details when particular content standards should be taught and/or assessed.  Pacing guides can be beneficial to help plan the year in order to cover the necessary material.  The guides help coordinate teaching efforts system-wide.  Should students move from one school to another in the school system, they can be assured of receiving a consistent quality of instruction.  Pacing guides are tools to help concentrate time, effort, and resources to maximize student learning.

## Opportunity for Improvement
Provide professional development training for certified and support staff in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.
(Indicators 5.3)

*Evidence and Rationale*
The system provides several professional learning activities.  However, little evidence was presented showing

professional development activities related to data interpretation and use of data.  Professional development is providing time, resources, and personnel to support staff to improve their knowledge and skills about teaching and learning.  For students to achieve, teachers must be adequately prepared and supported in all areas of instruction. Analyzing and interpreting data are major components of the school improvement process.

## Powerful Practice

The Transylvania County School System has very dedicated and supportive teachers and principals at all schools who promote student engagement and the implementation of effective instructional processes. (Indicators 3.3, 3.6)

### *Evidence and Rationale*

Stakeholder surveys, interviews and classroom observations indicated that teachers throughout the system engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure student success.  Teachers and principals at all grade levels provide instructional processes that inform students of learning expectations and standards of performance.  Student engagement is seen as an indicator of successful classroom instruction and is valued as an outcome of school improvement activities.

# Leadership Capacity

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

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

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

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

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

# Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

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

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success. | 2.00 | 2.67 |
| 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. | 2.17 | 2.69 |
| 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. | 2.00 | 2.87 |
| 1.4 | Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning. | 2.00 | 2.64 |

# Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools. | 3.00 | 2.96 |
| 2.2 | The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively. | 2.67 | 2.99 |
| 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. | 2.83 | 3.20 |
| 2.4 | Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction. | 3.00 | 3.00 |
| 2.5 | Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction. | 2.00 | 2.69 |

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 2.6 | Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success. | 2.17 | 2.78 |

# Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

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

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

| Evaluative Criteria | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Questionnaire Administration | 3.00 | 3.43 |
| Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis | 3.00 | 3.12 |

# Findings

**Improvement Priority**

Develop and implement a comprehensive system strategic plan that includes specific and measurable targets for all actions associated with strategic goals in order to guide the improvement process.
(Indicators 1.4)

*Evidence and Rationale*

The system has developed an improvement plan that is not a long-range comprehensive strategic plan. Documented evidence and interviews revealed that the system plan basically includes the goal area related to curriculum and instruction.  Currently, all actions associated with strategic goals, performance objectives and initiatives listed in the system strategic plan do not contain specific and measurable performance targets. Listing specific percentages, frequencies or numbers, which the school or system wishes to meet, would give those individuals responsible for the actions, objectives and initiatives an objective target to measure. Therefore, a yearly and systematic process (plan) should be developed that sets target performance measures, reviews action outcomes, and evaluates goals, objectives, and initiatives based on meeting the target measures.  Meeting target measures in light of student performance data should then focus administrative and instructional staff decisions to adapt the system strategic plan and individual school

improvement plans to address emerging needs that drive effective instructional practices.

## Improvement Priority

Ensure that each school engages in a systematic process for the completion of a self assessment report, an executive summary, AdvancED assurances and student performance data reports.
(Indicators 1.2)

### *Evidence and Rationale*

Each of the schools connected to a system are responsible for contributing to the preparations for hosting an AdvancED External Review Team.  Each school is responsible for updating their demographics and completing and submitting each of the following diagnostics in ASSIST: Executive Summary, Self-Assessment, AdvancED Assurances, Stakeholder Surveys and Student Performance.  Interviews and the review of other artifacts indicated that the Transylvania County School System did not ensure that all schools in the system completed each of these documents.

All schools completed stakeholder surveys but only one school in the system began the process to complete all other diagnostics.  Completing all required AdvancED diagnostics will help support the school improvement process.

## Opportunity for Improvement

Develop and implement a comprehensive system-wide communication plan to ensure effective two-way communications among all internal and external stakeholders.
(Indicators 2.5)

### *Evidence and Rationale*

Stakeholder interviews indicated insufficient information regarding school improvement had been disseminated to stakeholders and resulted in limited involvement in the process.  Communication of a clear process for ensuring that schools are meeting AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools was not apparent.  Pockets of excellence in teaching and learning were observed, yet clear communication paths that support the sharing of powerful practices across grade levels throughout the system were limited.  A comprehensive system-wide communication plan will ensure that all stakeholders are aware of accreditation standards, student learning, school performance, and achievement across the system.  This will also provide a framework for sharing and replicating successful instructional practices and ensuring that all schools are meeting the AdvancED standards.

# Resource Utilization

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

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

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

# Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.1 | The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs. | 2.67 | 2.98 |
| 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. | 3.00 | 2.98 |
| 4.3 | The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff. | 3.00 | 3.05 |
| 4.4 | The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system. | 2.00 | 2.67 |

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.5 | The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system. | 3.33 | 2.82 |
| 4.6 | The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs. | 3.00 | 2.64 |
| 4.7 | The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served. | 2.17 | 2.65 |
| 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. | 3.00 | 2.64 |

# Findings

## Opportunity for Improvement

Develop a system-wide plan to include a process to evaluate the effectiveness of support systems to meet the social and emotional needs of the students served.

(Indicators 4.7)

*Evidence and Rationale*

The system provided programs to meet the social and emotional needs of the students in the system. However, the review team found little evidence to show that there was a plan in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs.  A commitment to continuous improvement requires that school systems evaluate programs and monitor student progress throughout the year.

## Powerful Practice

The system has created a supportive, safe, and orderly environment which is conducive for student learning. (Indicators 4.3)

*Evidence and Rationale*

Interviews and site visits revealed the system maintains sites, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment.  The system has invested in adding security entrances in most schools and school resource officers in all schools.  The system presented documentation of school safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules and minutes.  Students and teachers indicated that they feel very safe in their school environment.  School safety is one of the most important factors in the educational arena.  All children deserve to be taught in a safe and orderly environment to help maximize student success.

# Conclusion

The External Review Team identified two "Powerful Practices" that became evident during the review process. These powerful practices relate to student engagement based on instructional processes and a safe learning environment. The system's general themes as perceived by the Team are as follows: The leadership and staff throughout the system have a commitment to a culture of shared values and beliefs of teaching and learning. A strong sense of school and community pride is evident throughout the school system. Students, teachers, parents and the community are loyal to the schools and have a great sense of pride for their system. It is also evident that the vision of the Transylvania County School System and the individual schools clearly focus on student learning.

The External Review Team identified four "Improvement Priorities" that became evident during the review process. The improvement priorities relate to strategic planning, vertical articulation, verifiable improvement in student learning and systematic monitoring of schools assessment systems. The system's general themes as perceived by the Team are as follows: development and implementation of a comprehensive district strategic plan to guide the improvement process in order to increase student achievement; development and implementation of a systemic process for vertical and horizontal articulation of the curriculum, among and between all grade levels and schools; utilization of student results systematically to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement plans related to student learning; and engaging in systematic processes for monitoring and maintaining data on all schools.

Although the school system has curriculum documents, there is a need for reviewing and revising them on a regular basis. It was also evident to the Team that a comprehensive process for evaluating the effectiveness of current programs is needed. Other opportunities for improvement focus primarily on stakeholder feedback and professional learning in the areas of interpretation of data and understanding equity and diversity in the classroom.

Some significant challenges lay ahead of the school system as state and federal dollars continue to decline and as the local (county) expenditure is the primary alternative for funding. Further, the system'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 North Carolina State University to conduct an Integrated Planning for School and Community Study to forecast enrollment trends and system needs for the upcoming decade. This study is scheduled to be completed by June 2015.

The system has done well to maintain strong performance and provide appropriate student support services in the face of declining revenues and drastically increasing student poverty in the last decade. In spite of these challenges, the Transylvania County School System moves forward in its quest for providing an excellent education for its students.

As Team members experienced each phase of the accreditation process, it became evident that instruction must be the main focus for continuous improvement and felt confident this would happen in Transylvania

County Schools.  There are dedicated teachers and administrators, a supportive board that knows its roles and responsibilities and a supportive community.  There is work to be done, but the Transylvania County School System has a dedication to its students and community.  During the superintendent's closing meeting, next steps were shared to help explain how the various actions left by the Team support the system's desire to achieve its goals of excellence for its students.

The method in which Transylvania County School System approaches the Improvement Priorities and Opportunities for Improvement will be important.  The actions are a guide to success for all students and for continuous improvement across all areas.  The Team believed that a collaborative process for designing strategies for implementing the actions can build needed ownership by all stakeholders.  Transylvania County Schools is positioned for success.  The system now has a road-map that becomes the foundation for growth and sustained continuous improvement as the dedicated members of this system fulfill their mission to prepare students to become caring and productive citizens in an ever-changing society.

# Improvement Priorities

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

- Develop and implement a comprehensive system strategic plan that includes specific and measurable targets for all actions associated with strategic goals in order to guide the improvement process.
- Develop and implement a systemic process for vertical and horizontal articulation of the curriculum, among and between all grade levels and schools, to monitor student progress and ensure readiness for future grade levels.
- Ensure that each school engages in a systematic process for the completion of a self assessment report, an executive summary, AdvancED assurances and student performance data reports.
- Utilize student results systematically to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement plans related to student learning.

# Accreditation Recommendation

## Index of Education Quality

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

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

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

|  | External Review IEQ Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|
| Overall Score | 267.48 | 282.79 |
| Teaching and Learning Impact | 274.60 | 274.14 |
| Leadership Capacity | 248.61 | 296.08 |
| Resource Utilization | 277.08 | 286.32 |

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

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

# Addenda

## Individual Institution Results (Self-reported)

| Institution Name | Teaching and Learning Impact | Leadership Capacity | Resource Utilization | Overall IEQ Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brevard Elementary School | 271.43 | 300.00 | 300.00 | 284.62 |
| Brevard High School | 319.05 | 327.27 | 328.57 | 323.08 |
| Brevard Middle School | 319.05 | 336.36 | 300.00 | 320.51 |
| Davidson River School | 304.76 | 300.00 | 300.00 | 302.56 |
| Pisgah Forest Elementary School | 300.00 | 300.00 | 300.00 | 300.00 |
| Rosman Elementary School | 290.48 | 290.91 | 242.86 | 282.05 |
| Rosman High School | 300.00 | 300.00 | 300.00 | 300.00 |
| Rosman Middle School | 300.00 | 300.00 | 300.00 | 300.00 |
| T. C. Henderson Elementary School | 314.29 | 318.18 | 300.00 | 312.82 |

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# Team Roster

| Member | Brief Biography |
|---|---|
| Dr. Ann Williams-Brown | Dr. Ann Williams-Brown is the Science Coordinator for the Houston County School System and she teaches courses for Middle Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (MGRESA). She lives in Warner Robins, Georgia. Before becoming the science coordinator, she served as a high school science teacher, assistant principal of instruction, and an adjunct professor at Macon State College and Georgia Military College. Dr. Williams-Brown served on the Georgia State Council for Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS-CASI). She has also served as the chairman for numerous school accreditation visits and currently serves as a lead evaluator for school district review teams. Dr. Williams-Brown holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Mercer University, Master of Science in Biology from Georgia College and State University, Educational Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership and Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Georgia. |
| Dr. Anna Renfro | Dr. Renfro retired in 2013 as the Executive Director of Pre-K-12 Curriculum Support Programs for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and is currently an Internship Supervisor for Wingate University. During her more than thirty-two years in education, she has served as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in Rutherford County NC Schools, Director of Middle Schools for Gaston County NC Schools, and principal of Cramerton Middle School in Gaston County, and James Martin Middle School in Charlotte, NC. Prior to moving into administration, Dr. Renfro taught several different subjects across different grade levels. She holds a Bachelor of Music Degree from Mars Hill University, a Master of Education in Middle Grades Mathematics from Queens University, and a Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a cognate in Educational Leadership from The University of South Carolina where her area of research focused on school improvement. She has presented on various topics at conferences including the North Carolina Middle School Annual Conference, North Carolina Summer Leadership Conference, North Carolina ASCD, and the ASCD Annual Conference. Dr. Renfro received the Outstanding Education Alumni Award for Mars Hill University and the North Carolina Middle School Association Region 8 Central Office Award. She holds North Carolina licensure in K-12 Music, Elementary Education, Mathematics grades 6-9, Computer Education grades 9-12, Academically Gifted, Principal, and Superintendent and South Carolina licensure in Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Level Language Arts, Middle Level Mathematics, Music Education, Elementary and Secondary Principal, and Superintendent. Dr. Renfro has served on both school and district accreditation teams throughout North Carolina. |
| John Sedey | John Sedey has been a teacher, school and district administrator, and educational consultant. Since retiring from public school administration, he has been in private practice, primarily consulting to career and technical education, alternative schools, and charter schools. In his career he has had the opportunity to provide leadership in program planning and development, student systems, environmental education, assessment and testing, state and federal program administration, and student support systems. John holds a bachelor's degree in history and business, a master's degree in education administration, and has done additional graduate work, including that as a Bush Public School Executive Fellow. He has led more than forty AdvancED external reviews since 2008. A majority of them have been public school system and digital learning accreditations. |

| Member | Brief Biography |
|---|---|
| Ms. Terri Hall | Terri serves as the district Instructional Technology Specialist for Hickory Public Schools in Hickory, NC.  Her primary responsibilities include coordinating technology integration throughout the district by overseeing digital teaching and learning and media programs.<br>Prior to instructional technology, Terri served as a districtwide technical coordinator and districtwide testing coordinator.<br>Terri has undergraduate degrees in Information Management Systems and Advanced Technology Education and a graduate degree in Instructional Technology for New Media and Global Education. |
| Dr. Vickie Perdue Scott | Dr. Vickie Perdue Scott currently serves as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Strategic Learning Partnerships for HighPoints Learning, Incorporated (HPL).  Dr. Scott's experiences include leading the Academic Division and developing Strategic Learning STEM Partnerships for HPL partner schools, districts and community partners throughout the United States.  Dr. Scott's extensive knowledge of the U.S. Department of Education accountability initiatives, research and evaluation procedures, as well as her certification and national training from the Grantsmanship Center and the National Association of Grant Professionals  have enabled her to support  Partner Schools and Community Partners to build a vision for excellence at every level.  She has secured millions of dollars from local, state and federal grants and foundations by partnering with corporate and community partners and school districts through her unique development of strategic learning partnership teams. Dr. Scott expanded and increased by 500% grant funding and corporate donations for local, state and national strategic learning partners, foundations and non-profits through a process of developing cross-functional teams and systems thinking.<br>Dr. Scott earned her Bachelor of Arts and Masters in Special Education Degrees from Mercer University, Masters and Specialist Degrees in Administration and Curriculum and Instructional Supervision from the University of Georgia, and earned her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration from Nova Southeastern University.  She has managed, supervised, implemented and monitored the development of quality instructional programs for districts with 90,000+ students, serving over 100+ schools, as well as designed math tutorial programs for  day, summer and after-school STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) programs.  She works across the United States regarding K-16 strategic learning partnerships by providing high quality professional learning to partner schools, regional leadership conferences, grant and fund development seminars, and research-based best practice workshops for educational institutions, faith-based and non-profit associations, government agencies and corporations.<br>Dr. Scott has served with distinction as an Interrelated Teacher of Exceptional Children P-12, Executive Director for Exceptional Children P-12, Executive Director for Grant Development Administration P-12, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning and Community Affairs P-12, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services P-12, and Deputy Superintendent for Academics P-12.  She also has experience as an adjunct professor designing Graduate Programs of Study in the Transformational Educational Leadership Doctoral Program with Mercer University's Atlanta Campus.  She has worked extensively with a variety of educational organizations, faith-based institutions, non-profit associations, foundations, governmental agencies, and major corporations to secure millions of dollars to support student achievement for diverse populations in urban, rural and suburban communities.<br>Dr. Scott offers nationally-recognized expertise in strategic planning, curriculum and instruction, program evaluation, community engagement, and grantsmanship. A nationally recognized educator, Dr. Scott is the recipient of several national, state and local honors.  She was named the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders Outstanding High School Principal and currently serves on the National K-12 District Accreditation Teams for AdvancED and the National Beta Club Board of Directors. |

| Member | Brief Biography |
|---|---|
| Mrs. Jency Miller Speight | Mrs. Speight began her educational career as a second grade teacher.  After a few years teaching, she assumed the role of literacy facilitator.  Next, she became an assistant principal at an elementary school and middle school.  Following that, she transitioned to the role of middle school principal.  After serving as principal, Mrs. Speight accepted the position of curriculum specialist in the central office.  Then, she served as elementary director for a couple of years and is currently in her first year as middle school director. |
| Ms. Janet Stephenson | Ms. Stephenson works as a School Improvement Specialist for Brevard Public Schools in central Florida.  Her work involves working with the district's lowest performing schools on closing the achievement gap.  She holds a master's degree in elementary education from the University of Central Florida and is currently pursuing her doctorate from American College of Education.  Previously, she has served Brevard Public Schools as a classroom teacher, literacy coach, gifted teacher, and Response to Intervention trainer.  She brings 15 years of classroom experience combined with 9 years at the district office supporting K-12 schools. Additionally, she has taught education courses as an Adjunct Professor at Eastern Florida State College. |

# Next Steps

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

# About AdvancED

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

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

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

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