Report of the
External Review Team
for
Calhoun Christian School

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Date: November 16, 2015 - November 18, 2015

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 review team arrived on Sunday evening (11/15) to meet and plan the visit. The team also met with the administrative team to help them feel comfortable.
The team spent 2.5 days on-site at the school visiting classrooms, meeting teachers, visiting students, engaging in interviews, and assessing student outcomes.

Prior to the visit, individual team members completed the ELEOT training and the External Review Team Member training as required by AdvancED. The team also conducted a readiness review via a phone conference two-weeks prior to the visit. The team studied and analyzed documents submitted by the school.

Also, the lead evaluator conducted a pre-accreditation visit in July to assess readiness for the review.

The external review team would like to thank the school for its hospitality and attentiveness toward the team while on-site. The team also recognizes the efforts of the administration and board in preparation of documents and details necessary for a successful accreditation visit. The team also thanks the school leadership for their transparency and openness in recognizing their strengths and development areas.

Finally, the team recognizes the school's passion and commitment to its mission, and dedication to Christian education.

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

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Superintendents	1
Board Members	7
Administrators	1
Instructional Staff	18
Students	8
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	7
Total	**42**

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 school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The school'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.	3.00	2.81
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	1.20	2.49
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	3.00	2.60
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.00	2.70
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	3.00	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.00	2.57
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.00	2.54
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.80	3.06

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	3.80	2.98
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	2.00	2.75
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	3.00	2.53
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.80	2.61

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.00	2.66
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.	3.00	2.37
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	3.00	2.06
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	2.00	2.46
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	3.00	2.71

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	3.06
Test Administration	3.00	3.45
Equity of Learning	4.00	2.70
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.92

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.

eleot™ Results

Performance Levels

Learning Environment	Review	Network
A. Equitable Learning	2.88	2.69
B. High Expectations	3.02	2.81
C. Supportive Learning	3.36	3.07
D. Active Learning	3.35	2.94
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback	3.16	2.79
F. Well-Managed Learning	3.28	3.14
G. Digital Learning	1.82	1.83

■ Review ■ Network
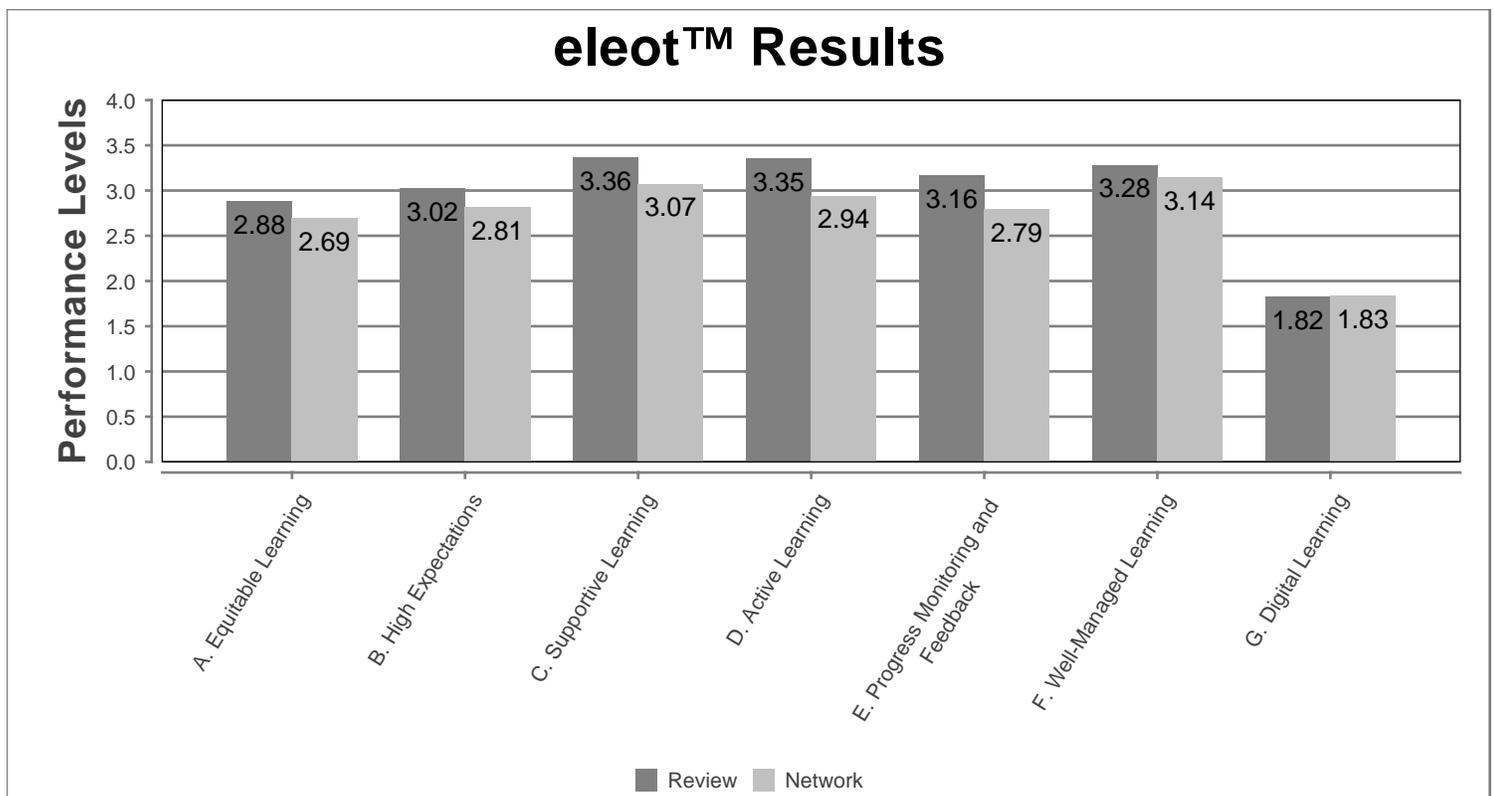
The external review team conducted (20) observations in elementary through high school classrooms. Generally, the team observed healthy student engagement, relevant curricular discussions, and accommodations of diverse student learning needs. The team also observed low use of technology tools by students during class periods.

Regarding technology, the team observed that there were few technology tools available to teachers in the elementary program.

The external review observed a high priority on student learning while also observing the school is addressing achievement gaps. The school acknowledges the need for improving access to technology for students and teachers.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	2.60	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	30.00%	30.00%	10.00%	30.00%
2.	3.60	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	65.00%	30.00%	5.00%	0.00%
3.	3.20	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	60.00%	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%
4.	2.10	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	15.00%	25.00%	15.00%	45.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.88						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.25	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	60.00%	20.00%	5.00%	15.00%
2.	3.30	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	50.00%	35.00%	10.00%	5.00%
3.	2.50	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	35.00%	20.00%	5.00%	40.00%
4.	3.15	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	35.00%	45.00%	20.00%	0.00%
5.	2.90	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	30.00%	40.00%	20.00%	10.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.02						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.35	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	70.00%	10.00%	5.00%	15.00%
2.	3.45	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	75.00%	5.00%	10.00%	10.00%
3.	3.30	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	55.00%	30.00%	5.00%	10.00%
4.	3.60	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	70.00%	25.00%	0.00%	5.00%
5.	3.10	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	55.00%	20.00%	5.00%	20.00%

Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.36

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.35	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	60.00%	20.00%	15.00%	5.00%
2.	3.25	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	45.00%	40.00%	10.00%	5.00%
3.	3.45	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	65.00%	15.00%	20.00%	0.00%

Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.35

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback				%			
Item	Average	Description		Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.55	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning		65.00%	30.00%	0.00%	5.00%
2.	3.25	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding		55.00%	25.00%	10.00%	10.00%
3.	3.40	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content		55.00%	35.00%	5.00%	5.00%
4.	2.85	Understands how her/his work is assessed		40.00%	25.00%	15.00%	20.00%
5.	2.75	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback		35.00%	30.00%	10.00%	25.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.16							

F. Well-Managed Learning				%			
Item	Average	Description		Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.40	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers		65.00%	15.00%	15.00%	5.00%
2.	3.45	Follows classroom rules and works well with others		60.00%	30.00%	5.00%	5.00%
3.	3.20	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities		50.00%	25.00%	20.00%	5.00%
4.	3.05	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities		45.00%	30.00%	10.00%	15.00%
5.	3.30	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences		60.00%	20.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.28							

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	2.00	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	20.00%	15.00%	10.00%	55.00%
2.	1.80	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	20.00%	5.00%	10.00%	65.00%
3.	1.65	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	15.00%	5.00%	10.00%	70.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.82						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Improve overall instructional planning.

(Indicator 3.2)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.2

Evidence and Rationale

The administrator and the teaching staff should define a strategy to develop school wide Curriculum Mapping. This effort should include, but not necessarily be limited to documenting grade level scope and sequences, as well as creating objective-based lesson plans.

This change will elevate academic rigor and ensure consistent delivery of best educational practices across the grade levels.

(see ACSI Assurance #30)

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 school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction 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 school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	2.80	2.73
1.2	The school's leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	3.80	2.96
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.00	2.56

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school 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 school.	3.80	2.96
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	2.00	2.91
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	3.00	3.15
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	4.00	3.09
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	4.00	2.79
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	3.80	2.74

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	3.35
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00	3.04

Findings

Powerful Practice

The school demonstrates a high commitment to student service and mission activities.
(Indicator 2.4)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.4

Evidence and Rationale

The external review team observed that the leadership at Calhoun Christian School has institutionalized two exemplary service components. One such service component is the commitment to missions for the entire high school. For example, the annual senior trip to the Dominican Republic is a capstone project for seniors as they exit their formal K-12 Christian education experience. While on the mission trip, students work alongside DR pastors and fellow DR Believers to improve living conditions in local neighborhoods. Students, parents, and faculty conduct multiple fundraising events to fund the trip.

Another exemplary service component observed by the team is the student-led cleaning of the building. Just after lunch each day, students work in their assigned areas cleaning, sweeping, vacuuming, and emptying trash to keep the school clean. The external review team interviewed a number of students, without administrators present, and found that students genuinely enjoy the service opportunity to keep the building clean. Comments from students included, that it is "cool" to keep the building clean while working alongside their friends.

These service components align well with the school's mission which states that "challenging children to serve" is a vital student outcome.

(See ACSI Assurance #28)

Powerful Practice
The school's administrator and staff are commended for exemplary implementation of the Positive Behavior Support program.
(Indicator 2.5)

Primary Indicator
Indicator 2.5

Evidence and Rationale
The school is to be particularly commended for their very thorough analysis of the needs of their school population and the integration of the program with the mission of the school. The PBS program was organized into three broad themes of Honoring God, Honoring Others, and Honoring Oneself. Specific behaviors were identified that were appropriate to particular locations in the school such as the hallways, classrooms, and playgrounds. These were further subdivided into memorable statements that were directed specifically to students in the elementary, middle, and high school grades.

Implementation of the PBS has led to the development of a Christ honoring culture throughout the school.

(See ACSI Assurance #31)

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 school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	1.80	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	3.00	2.96
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.80	3.11
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	3.00	2.78
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.00	2.52

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	3.00	2.81
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	2.80	2.75

Findings

Improvement Priority

Redistribute fiscal and personnel resources to balance administrative and faculty workload.

(Indicator 4.1)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.1

Evidence and Rationale

Classroom observations and interviews with the superintendent revealed that some teachers are teaching multiple classes simultaneously, leaving students unattended at times. Additionally, the superintendent of the school, already working extra hours, is not able to confirm that teachers are achieving curricular goals because of her workload. The external team observed that the workload of the staff and administration is becoming excessive and beginning to hamper the growth of the school.

The additional personnel will allow the school to improve its instructional program by allowing individuals to focus on their areas of individual strength.

(See ACSI Assurance #14)

Opportunity For Improvement

Develop a properly staffed Learning Resource Center.

(Indicator 4.7)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.7

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with staff, parents, and administration revealed the shared conviction that a properly staffed learning resource center would enhance the overall program and ensure the success of students who are presently underserved.

The school is doing a good job of evaluating students with exceptional needs; however, it is limited in its ability

to meet the needs of these students. As the school grows and adds to its faculty, the leadership should give strong consideration to employing an individual with special education training.

(see ACSI Assurance #17)

Opportunity For Improvement

Establish a plan for the acquisition and integration of technological tools as a seminal portion of the student instructional experience.
(Indicator 4.5)

Primary Indicator
Indicator 4.5

Evidence and Rationale
Classroom observations and interviews with staff and administration reveal a lack of opportunities for students to utilize technology in the learning environment.

The integration of technology in the instructional program provides students with greater opportunities for collaborative learning, interactivity with teachers and a broader peer spectrum, and research. Students who are utilizing technology become actively engaged in the learning process rather than passive listeners. Today's students will need a broad familiarity with technological tools upon entering the workforce.

(See ACSI Assurance #35)

Conclusion

The external team notices the deep commitment of the school to its mission. The school is intentionally living out its mission of "academic excellence", "upholding God's Truth", and "challenging children to serve."

The focus of the school creates a family atmosphere across grade levels as well to their teachers. Noted comments include common themes "family", "community", "Christian values", and "serving." The sense of family extends far beyond the school walls and into the greater school community.

One final theme is central to analysis of standardized data. The team recognizes the efforts to organize and analyze a large set of standardized test data. The "yellow" chart is a model for many other schools to use, in the team's opinion.

The external review team recommends a focus on completing the work of curriculum maps and lessons plans.

Furthermore, the team acknowledges the superintendent's efforts but cautions against an extended time period of leaving the load of responsibility exclusively on her shoulders. The team recommends to the board to give serious consideration to expanding the administrative team. Similarly, the team advises school leadership to analyze teacher workload which includes course preparation, fundraising activity, and extra-curricular responsibilities.

The team encourages the school leadership to make use of the data and recommendations supplied as part of this review to improve the school's overall program. We encourage the school to strive for success for all students. In general, the ERT observed the school to be on a positive trajectory toward growth and sustainability in its programs and offerings. The team recommends implementation of systems to correct two Improvement Priorities and address two Opportunity for Improvements. The team highly recommends continued support of two documented powerful practices.

The team's summary for each standard is shown below.

Summary of Standard 1

Calhoun Christian School is exemplary in its development of a Christian culture centered on its mission statement. The development of Christian character in its pupils is supported by all the adults (teachers, parents, administration, and board) who have jointly committed to both a statement of faith but also a philosophy of education that emphasizes service to others.

This commitment is on display in virtually every part of the building through the use of age and venue appropriate positive behavior messages that promote the themes of honoring God, others, and oneself. Through the interview process, every group commented on the importance of prayer as central to life at CCS.

Students demonstrated several ways in which they internalized the values of CCS. First, they unanimously

declared their support for the student cleaning program. Second, even the younger students were fully aware of and supportive of the high school missions trips. Third, they clearly articulated their commitment to following the principles of Matthew 18 which require Christians to speak directly to persons who have offended them and not exacerbate the problem by spreading gossip or involving others who are not part of the solution.

Calhoun Christian School could strengthen two of the indicators for Standard One by developing processes and a plan to continuously review, revise, and communicate the school's purpose and direction to its various stakeholders through a variety of media. Having these plans and processes in place will ensure that the school maintains its focus on character development as well as student learning regardless of the changes in demographics and the broader culture that may occur in the future.

Summary of Standard 2

Regarding Standard 2 on governance and leadership, the ERT measured and observed a number of commendable strategies and in fact exemplary practices involving two indicators. The board at Calhoun Christian School recognizes the transition period in which they now exist. The school is still relatively young and less than ten years ago merged with another Christian school. Until recently, school board policies have encouraged board members access to the operational details of running the school. This strategy was necessary as the board transitioned through the merger and the transition from a long-term superintendent, to an interim, and now back to a permanent superintendent.

Over the last couple of years, the board has recognized the need to convert to a policy form of governance. As demonstration of this change, the board revised their policy manual in November 2014. Evidence of new policies was observed by the ERT and evidence of the conversion was discussed during the interview with board members.

Two powerful practices emerged during the assessment time period, both practices associated with Standard 2. The first powerful practice supported Indicator 2.4, "Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction." Given the missional and servant-hood emphasis of the school's purpose, the ERT observed two supporting activities which are exemplary. First, seniors in the high school travel to the Dominican Republic and conduct missions work amongst the poor people of the community. This trip is paid for by students and fundraising efforts. Second, the ERT observed students in 1st grade through 12th grade cleaning the school on a daily basis. This activity builds community amongst the students and has created a culture of servant-hood amongst the student body and staff.

A second powerful practice observed by the ERT, was that of the Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) system installed by the administrative team. PBS encourages and rewards student behaviors that align with the school's expectations. The PBS system supports Indicator 2.5, "Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction." Each major area of the school has an expectation chart for students (stakeholders). Those areas observed included: hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, classrooms, and the playground. The school has done a commendable job in implementing PBS throughout its entire student body.

Summary of Standard 3

The External Review Team confirmed that Calhoun Christian School connects curriculum to the educational mission that promotes academic excellence in the development of the whole child. Observations of the classrooms revealed displays of student work and student engagement in various types of learning. Teachers created a positive and relaxed atmosphere which enabled students to be actively involved in the learning process. The school offers a strong academic program that ensures achievement and preparation for college. Terra Nova and ACT testing results, data analysis and curriculum guides support teacher effectiveness and student learning. Curriculum guides were thorough and supported standards based teaching strategies. Nevertheless, the teaching staff could enhance their educational practices through the creation of objective based lesson plans and school wide curriculum mapping. A mentoring program for new teachers has been established and has proven essential for the success of faculty. Interviews revealed that teachers are observed regularly as well as participate in collaborative learning communities and consistent professional development. Communication with parents relative to their child's education is consistent and comprehensive. Excellent educational leadership by the Superintendent provides a solid foundation for a rigorous and robust program. It is clear that CCS is preparing young people to live full productive, servant lives by offering a challenging, Christ-centered college preparatory education committed to pursuing excellence.

Summary of Standard 4

Regarding Standard 4 on providing resources for all students, the ERT observed systems and policies that are still maturing but moving forward. Through interviews, observations, and assessment of documents the team determined that this standard meets the minimum requirements but needs to improve. For example, regarding the requirements of indicator 4.7, "The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students." The team observed few resources available to create and deliver services required for students with IEPs. The school does receive services from the LEA, but those services are limited.

The team also observed minimal implementation of technology for students. Indicator 4.5 requires that "the technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs." While technology does exist, student access is either limited or lesson plans support limited use of the available technology.

Finally, the team observed the need for increased resources. Indicator 4.1 requires, "Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program." Through observations and interviews, the team determined the current school model is taxing the administrator and teachers too much. For example, in addition to administrative duties, the superintendent also teaches, does most of the student discipline, and creates many of the IEPs for the students. In addition to teaching responsibilities, teachers are also responsible for fundraising for class projects and other duties. As the school grows, the team does not think this model is sustainable for an extended time-period.

Summary of Standard 5

While observing Calhoun Christian School, the ERT noted several areas of strength in the area of using results for continuous improvement. Teachers and staff members spoke of regular feedback from the administrator in the form of monthly formal evaluations of the classroom atmosphere. The administrator's commitment to multiple weekly in-class "drop-ins" was validated by the testimony of the staff, who considered themselves well supported by the front office.

With assistance from multiple board members, the school administration has undertaken a significant effort to evaluate and interpret assessment-generated data, particularly annual Terra Nova scores. These test results are clearly communicated to stakeholders in a dis-aggregated form and have been utilized in curricular and staffing decisions. CCS administration dedicated appropriate professional development time to equipping teachers with the skills necessary to understand test results and respond appropriately in the classroom.

The ERT also noted some areas in need of improvement. An administrative bias against lesson plans as "busy work" resulted in a decision not to require the regular submission of plans by teachers. There has been an unsubstantiated assumption that teachers are consistently preparing and using daily lesson plans, but no documentation was available.

There was also a lack of purposeful effort to ensure vertical and horizontal curricular alignment, perhaps attributable to an administrative workload too significant for a single school leader to undertake. The ERT recommends actions to address this issue as well as the collection of daily lesson plans.

Furthermore, Calhoun Christian School meets all ACSI assurances except for those related to an OFI (#17 and #35) or an IP (#14 and #27).

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:

- Improve overall instructional planning.
- Redistribute fiscal and personnel resources to balance administrative and faculty workload.

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	297.95	278.34
Teaching and Learning Impact	288.57	268.94
Leadership Capacity	329.09	292.64
Resource Utilization	277.14	283.23

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

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Dr. Jim Dolson	Dr. Jim Dolson is the Superintendent at Jackson Christian School (Michigan). Before entering education, Jim spent 25 years in the automotive industry. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Engineering, a Master's in Educational Leadership, and a Doctorate in Education. He and his wife Cathy have been married for 32 years.
Robert Akers	I am happy to serve as head of school at Covenant Christian School in Bloomington, Indiana as well as Lead Pastor of Landmark Church, also in Bloomington.
Ms. Beth Denhart	Current Administrator at Warren Woods Christian School
Dr. Brian Hazeltine	Dr. Hazeltine is currently the Superintendent of Algoma Christian School near Kent City, Michigan. He received a Bachelor of Education degree with a history major from the University of Saskatchewan, a Bible College certificate from Briarcrest Bible College, a Master's in Christian School administration from Grace Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Education from Walden University. He has 35 years of teaching experience primarily at the middle school level teaching English, math, science, social studies, and Bible. However, he has also taught at the high school, community college and university levels including graduate courses in education. Dr. Hazeltine was the founder and principal of a Christian school in Alberta, Canada for 20 years, and has a total of 25 years of administrative experience as a principal or superintendent.

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Sue Hoffenbacher	Mrs. Sue Hoffenbacher became Superintendent of Southfield Christian School in February 2013. In her career as an educator, Mrs. Hoffenbacher has served with distinction as a classroom teacher, coach, middle school principal and high school principal. Her professional experience, passion for students, and deep commitment to the ministry of SCS uniquely qualifies her in the position as Superintendent. After graduating from Spring Arbor College in 1984, Mrs. Hoffenbacher spent 16 years teaching Business and Computers in the Secondary School. She obtained her Master's degree from Eastern Michigan University in 1987. In 2007, Mrs. Hoffenbacher was appointed the first principal of the newly formed middle school where she served for three years. In 2010, Mrs. Hoffenbacher served as both the middle school and high school principal and then served an additional two years solely as the high school principal. In February 2013, she transitioned into her current role as Superintendent of Southfield Christian School. Sue and her husband, Dave, have two adult children, Kristi and Andy, who are SCS graduates. It is her privilege as a school leader to embrace the mission of SCS: Southfield Christian School is a Christ-centered, college-preparatory educational community committed to growing disciples for Jesus Christ and pursuing excellence for the glory of God.

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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