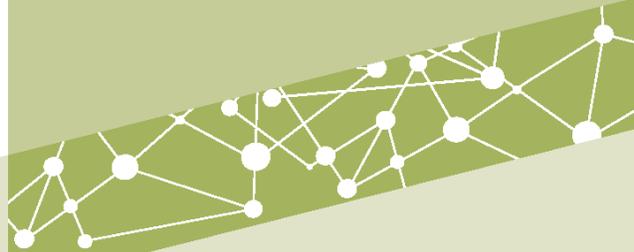


May 5 - 8, 2019



AdvancED® Engagement Review Report



AdvancED® Performance Accreditation

» **Results for:**
Worth County School System
103 Eldridge Street
Sylvester, Georgia 31791

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Introduction

AdvancED Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

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

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

AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results

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

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

Leadership Capacity Domain

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

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

Learning Capacity Domain

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

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

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

Resource Capacity Domain

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

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

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®)

Results

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

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

eleot® Observations		
Total Number of eleot® Observations	80	
Environments	Rating	AIN
Equitable Learning Environment	2.73	2.86
Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs	1.68	1.89
Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	3.27	3.74
Learners are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner	3.35	3.77
Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions	2.60	2.06
High Expectations Environment	2.54	3.02
Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher	2.61	3.17
Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	2.88	3.14
Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work	2.06	2.83
Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	2.44	3.06
Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning	2.74	2.89
Supportive Learning Environment	3.13	3.61
Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful	3.09	3.66

eleot® Observations		
Total Number of eleot® Observations	80	
Environments	Rating	AIN
Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	3.02	3.49
Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks	3.17	3.66
Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher	3.24	3.66
Active Learning Environment	2.64	3.08
Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and the teacher predominate	2.70	3.34
Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences	2.55	2.80
Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities	3.16	3.43
Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments	2.14	2.74
Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	2.50	3.14
Learners monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored	2.46	3.20
Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work	2.84	3.37
Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content	2.61	3.37
Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed	2.09	2.63
Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.31	3.58
Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other	3.54	3.86
Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others	3.48	3.83
Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another	2.96	3.09
Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions	3.27	3.54
Digital Learning Environment	1.70	1.50
Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	2.11	1.60
Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	1.64	1.46
Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and/or work collaboratively for learning	1.35	1.46

Assurances

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

Assurances			
Met	X	Unmet	
Unmet Assurances			

AdvancED Continuous Improvement System

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

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

Initiate

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

Improve

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

Impact

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

Findings

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

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

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

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

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

Institution IEQ	271.77	AIN 5 Year IEQ Range	278.34 – 283.33
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Insights from the Review

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

The Engagement Review Team identified several themes that correlate to the continuous improvement process for enhancing the goals of Worth County Schools (WCS). These themes present strengths and opportunities to guide the school system's improvement journey.

A caring, supportive, well-managed learning environment exists in WCS. In many of the interviews, the words collaborative, happy, rewarding, supportive, motivational and compassionate were heard. Elementary students used the words amazing, rewarding and fantastic to describe their school. Many of the teachers and one of the principals attended Worth County Schools. "We are like family and are all about building relationships," were comments from interviews with many of the teachers. Secondary teachers shared how they feel all teachers have big hearts and are dedicated and tight knit. Teachers shared that the staff is not scared to voice opinions, and school level administrators and some system level administrators are approachable. During classroom observations, students demonstrated a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged and purposeful throughout the schools. Congenial and supportive relationships were observed between teachers and students. Eighty-eight percent of the elementary students and 53 percent of the middle and high students indicated on the School Climate Survey that their teachers are caring. Community members and parents classified teachers as proactive, caring and honest. Survey results indicated that parents classify teacher interactions as respectful and supportive, while student survey results reveal students who are happy and excited about learning.

An essential component of the caring, supportive learning environment is adult advocacy. Students spoke of the relationships they have with their teachers. Homeroom teachers serve as the advocate for their students. The more at-risk students are assigned mentors who check on their assigned students on a regular basis. Elementary students told of classroom sessions covering such topics as bullying and making friends. The most recent school climate ratings for Worth County Schools revealed scores of threes and fours on the state rating scale that ranges from one star to five stars. Rating levels of three and four on the WCS College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) indicate that parents and students feel safe and supported by the school system.

Team members observed pervasive evidence of a well-managed learning environment in classrooms across the system. Students spoke and interacted respectfully with their teachers and each other and followed classroom rules. Class time was purposefully used with little wasted time or disruptions. At the primary and elementary levels, students transitioned smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another.

The warm and welcoming environment is further noted by the well-maintained school grounds and facilities at each school campus. Student work is displayed throughout classrooms and halls at most schools. System leaders disclosed that the system has one social worker, and each school once had a fulltime parent coordinator to support students and families. Recently, some schools have cut the parent coordinator position and assigned that responsibility to a staff member who is given a stipend to coordinate home/school activities on a part-time basis.

Many staff members voiced their commitment to building relationships, providing parenting support and getting families involved in their children's education. "We are not where we need to be with this quality school factor because of reductions in positions and the need to combine job responsibilities," stated an internal stakeholder. School leaders mentioned that Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) was implemented in all schools three years ago to create more positive school environments. Interview data and statistics shared by the system indicate an overall level of success with PBIS, yet there is variation with implementation status from school to school. A positive, supportive environment is a cornerstone that is ingrained throughout the culture and operations of the school system. WCS is encouraged to continue the support and sustain the practices systemwide that are yielding results in improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness with a special emphasis on improving parenting support and family engagement.

Several aspects of resource management are the foundation for the success enjoyed by WCS. The school system is financially stable with a healthy fund balance and a Financial Efficiency Star Rating of four stars which gives a comparison of system spending per student with overall academic performance. Five Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) initiatives have provided funding for new and renovated schools, instructional technology, buses and safety/security systems. Many stakeholders spoke of their pride in the new, three story, state-of-the-art high school facility. System leaders told of the plans for much of ESPLOST Five to be spent on upgrades to the middle school, the oldest facility in the system. Not only are the facilities new or updated, but they are well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing. In addition to the facilities being a source of pride, internal and external stakeholders always mentioned teachers as the "lifeblood" of WCS. Teachers were described as dedicated, hard-working, self-motivated and willing to go over and beyond to get the job done. Parents shared that many teachers are graduates of the county and have returned to give back to their community. Teachers spoke of how they support one another, no matter what. "We strongly believe that good teachers bring good teachers to our schools," stated a teacher. "Even with instability in some administrative positions, we have kept our focus on the students and continued to move forward."

Acquisition of technology and informational resources is another strength of resource management. Even though some computers need updating, there are ChromeBooks and I-Pads in sufficient numbers that the ratio is one to one across the system. Clever is being used as the easy-to-use, personalized, one-login experience for all students. Teachers shared how the purchase of this one technology tool has saved valuable instructional time. Google Classroom is widely used, and numerous academic-related software programs are available (IXL, Moby Max, NewsELA, Studies Weekly, I-Station, etc.) Technology instructional support personnel are also available to assist staff members in their effective usage of technology. Ample instructional resources and materials are available in all classrooms to support curriculum, programs and student needs. The school system received the Striving Readers Grant in 2014 and this afforded the system additional professional learning for teachers, as well as universal screeners to benchmark reading progress and robust materials, curriculum and technology to support literacy integration. One major source of pride mentioned by parents, a community leader, staff members and students is the Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) program. The addition of programs and course options has recently led to an increase from 150 to 253 Pathway Completers in WCS. Even with the many strengths in resource management, there are documented needs in this area. There have been two finance directors in two years, and the need now exists to streamline the reporting process, develop new internal controls, and provide more transparency. Although technology has been at the forefront of the system's initiatives, there is a strong need to more effectively integrate the use of digital tools in teaching and learning. Technology usage by students was observed in only 42 percent of all classroom observations. A high-quality school system must have formal, transparent planning processes for long-range resource management and find innovative and authentic ways to integrate student use of technology in a way that fosters a positive and strong digital learning environment.

Teachers across the system are focused on teaching a curriculum that is aligned to the Georgia standards to ensure student success. From the System Quality Factor Diagnostic to the interviews with internal stakeholder groups, a focus on student achievement is evident. Curriculum maps and pacing guides are developed by teachers and administrators for all subjects, housed in the Google team drive and continuously updated. Investments were made for quality curriculum resources aligned to state standards. The universal screeners, Math Inventory and

Reading Inventory, were adopted for use systemwide to provide teachers with the data they need to create, implement, and adjust personalized instruction. Teacher collaboration opportunities through data teams, content area meetings, and grade level meetings lay the foundation for a collaborative culture and are paving the way to an improved learning environment. Intervention blocks/classes across all grade levels have been established to address gaps among student populations. Each school has a Response to Intervention (RTI) coordinator, supported by the systemwide RTI coordinator, who drives the RTI process and the intervention blocks in every school. Interviews revealed the system level curriculum director, the special needs director, the RTI director and the school improvement specialists from each school support curriculum mastery to meet the strategic goal of improving student achievement. Stakeholders shared such examples of success as improved College and Career Ready Performance Indexes (CCRPI) for three of the four schools, gap reductions for three of the four schools, and increases in content mastery for three of the four schools, in addition to the increase from 150 to 253 CTAE Pathway Completers. A low graduation rate accompanied by the lack of growth in content mastery and gap reduction at the secondary level demonstrates a need to examine the secondary course guides and pacing charts to ensure alignment to state standards. The implementation of an aligned, standards-based curriculum is essential, and all instructional staff must be responsible for the curriculum and hold each other accountable for its consistent application across all classrooms and content areas systemwide.

Even with the adoption and implementation of a curriculum aligned to state standards, there is a documented need for the implementation of instructional strategies that are monitored and adjusted to ensure differentiation, challenging and rigorous activities, and promotion of creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving. In the opening presentation to the Engagement Review Team, the superintendent shared concern regarding the large numbers of students scoring at Level Two on state tests, reflecting a large majority of WCS students as Developing Learners instead of Proficient or Distinguished Learners. “This is indicative of an instructional issue and a need for more rigor in Tier One instruction,” stated the superintendent. He also shared the need for a data management system and the system decision to implement Performance Matters in 2019-2020. The Comprehensive Needs Assessment for WCS for 2018-2019 revealed a system rating of “Emerging” for its coherent instructional system utilizing the four structures of planning, delivering, monitoring and refining quality instruction. There was a *Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Professional Learning Expectations* document for 2018-2019 that spelled out curriculum, assessment, instructional and professional standards, yet very few staff members verbalized an understanding of a systemwide instructional framework. Some school improvement specialists shared how they are spending a portion of professional learning communities (PLC) time this year discussing formative instructional practices (FIP) as a way of improving teaching and student learning. Based on eleot observations conducted by the team, the overall average ratings in six of the seven learning environments that are most conducive to student learning are below the AdvancED network average, thus confirming a need for improvement in effective learning opportunities for students. Although the overall average for the Digital Learning Environment is slightly above the network average, students were using digital tools in only 41 percent of the classes to conduct research, solve problems and/or create original works for learning. In only 34 percent of the classes were students using technology to communicate and/or work collaboratively. Overall, evidence indicates a need for the system to provide continuous professional development for an effective, systemwide instructional framework that supports monitoring and adjusting of instructional strategies for quality and fidelity of implementation. These desired practices will ensure that differentiation, challenging and rigorous activities, creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving will be sustained and become ingrained throughout the culture of the school system.

Opportunities are provided for stakeholder engagement to support the achievement of WCS’ vision and mission, yet two-way communication and active and meaningful participation of internal and external stakeholders to inform decision-making are not embedded components of the continuous improvement process. Transparent, two-way, proactive communication with all internal and external stakeholder groups to generate and sustain support for initiatives and improvements in instruction and student services is needed. On the Comprehensive Needs Assessment for 2018-2019, the system rated as “Emerging” these three areas of Family and Community Engagement: establishes structures which promote clear and open communication between school and

stakeholders; ensures family and community members have feedback and problem-solving opportunities throughout the system; and communicates system policies and procedures in a timely manner to relevant audiences. In response to the low ratings in family and community engagement, staff mentioned all the opportunities that are provided but noted a literacy problem and pride getting in the way of helping to fix the problem with parent participation. The wide land mass and a lack of proper transportation throughout the county were also given as reasons for poor parent participation rates. Surveys were returned by only 342 parents and only two community members and nine parents attended the scheduled interviews with the Engagement Review Team. In almost every interview group with internal and external stakeholders, the team heard parental engagement as an area needing improvement. The school system has one social worker and some part-time parent coordinators. Until recently, each school had a fulltime parent coordinator but, due to the need to reduce some positions, many of the responsibilities of the parent coordinators have been “tacked on” to an already full-time person as most of the parent coordinator positions were eliminated. When asked about initiatives to engage parents and community members, such activities as Grandparents Day, Mothers’ and Fathers’ Muffins for Breakfast, Veterans Day program, book fairs, Open House activities, sports banquets, and Homecoming celebrations were mentioned. Some parents attend Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. The Code of Conduct is revised and updated annually, and parents are asked for their input. Leaders shared that only three to five parents typically respond/provide feedback regarding revisions to the Code of Conduct. The overall feeling that emanated from many of the interviews with leaders and internal stakeholders was one of complacency as one stakeholder summed up the comments from many by saying, “All we can do is provide the opportunities. We can’t make them attend.”

The school marquee, periodic newsletters from some schools, Peachjar, Infinite Campus, social media, and school and system websites are some of the methods of informing parents. The system does not have a formalized communication plan. When asked how stakeholders are kept informed of school programs and initiatives, many of the internal and external stakeholders shared that most communication is informal. “When meetings are held, they are more informational and not two-way communication,” stated a staff member. When asked about the Capital Plan and the various ESPLOST projects, internal and external stakeholders are aware of the expressed need but do not know many details of the proposed projects. One stakeholder said, “We have had three superintendents in five years and will soon have our third high school principal in less than five years. Parents and community want to be supportive, but we sometimes don’t know how when we are not kept informed.” One staff member said, “We can’t champion the school system if we are not kept informed.” Numerous stakeholders shared the need for more transparent communication and more face to face opportunities for open communication from the superintendent to internal and external stakeholders. The superintendent shared that he had initiated a Superintendent’s Liaison Committee with two persons from each school to meet on a regular basis, but internal stakeholders said they had not met this semester. Establishing a proactive and transparent communication protocol to provide regular and consistent communication with stakeholders and valuing and supporting active engagement of all stakeholders are strongly encouraged to support the achievement of the school system’s vision and mission.

Interviews and documentation revealed a need for more formalized processes and procedures to ensure consistency, to assess system effectiveness, and to ensure sustainability of effective programs, practices and processes. Without exception, most groups of teachers and administrators who were interviewed spoke of what is happening at their school, not about systemwide initiatives. When asked about the system’s mission, vision and beliefs, most persons shared their school direction and not that of the system. As mentioned earlier, when asked what the instructional framework for the school system is, internal stakeholders could not speak of expected instructional strategies or any non-negotiables in terms of instruction. Lesson plan expectations varied from school to school, as did the expectation to post learning standards or “I Can” statements. When asked about data

usage and data management processes, there is no data management system. Discussions revealed a commitment to implement a data management system in 2019-2020. Technology integration is another area needing monitoring so that system expectations will be achieved. Extensive resources have been allocated for technology infrastructure and equipment, yet an inventory of technology equipment was not available. The elect results reflected effective usage by students in approximately 42 percent of the classes observed. Any documentation reviewed by the team was about technology purchases and ratios of computers to students, not about the quality and fidelity of implementation.

Teachers and leaders at all schools were interviewed and asked about systemwide initiatives that are implemented and sustained across all grade levels. Consistent responses included the implementation of Reading Inventory and Math Inventory as universal screeners, implementation of the RTI process, implementation of PBIS at all schools, and having standards-based curriculum maps and pacing guides across all grade levels. When asked about how these programs and practices are being monitored and adjusted to ensure quality and fidelity of implementation, responses depended on the particular program or practice. A staff member shared that PBIS has been implemented for three years, although it is being implemented differently at the various schools. The system has been using RTI and tiered instruction for several years but only recently finalized the processes and procedures for the different tiers and is just now placing a real focus on tier one instruction. Having standards-based curriculum maps and pacing guides as living documents which are under constant revision and updating as Google documents is a systemwide initiative. Some system administrators commented that if the curriculum maps and pacing guides are aligned and on target with the state standards, the next steps are in refining the instructional framework to ensure gains in student achievement that are needed to prepare students for the next level.

Processes and procedures for teacher recruitment and retention are in place, yet interviews and records revealed a need for improvement. The human resources director indicated five percent of teachers had out of field permits this current school year, and the teacher attrition rate for four of the past five years has been higher than the state average. "We anticipate the turnover rate to be high again this coming year because of 12 to 15 teachers not returning to the high school," stated an internal stakeholder. Online surveys and exit interviews have been added to the retention process. For next school year, the system is considering signing bonuses and tuition payments for identified participants. Also, there is not a formalized induction, coaching and mentoring program for new staff members. Interviews revealed that most schools assign mentors, and grade level teams support new teachers and staff members informally. Neither is there a formalized program to cultivate leaders within the system. More than 50 percent of the teachers and leaders who were interviewed are from Worth County. Several shared how cultivating leaders and promoting from within would grow the system and encourage retention of employees. Developing and implementing formalized processes and procedures for staff recruitment and retention, as well as cultivation of leaders, will improve student performance and organizational effectiveness as the processes and programs become ingrained in the culture of the school system.

Professional development is yet another area needing a systemwide process and protocol. In the Comprehensive Needs Assessment of 2018-2019, ensuring that professional learning is relevant and addresses adult and student needs and assessing the impact of professional learning on staff practices and student learning and making adjustments as needed were rated as "Emerging" for the system. The District Strategic Plan for 2019-2024 included goals and strategies for providing job specific professional learning and the implementation of processes to determine effectiveness of the training opportunities. There was very limited evidence of specific professional learning targets for the system as well as a systematic process to implement, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning. Teachers even reported that professional development was not always planned and sometimes topics were based on what a teacher was doing well in his/her classroom, rather than a specific target to address rigor or higher order thinking. The school system is urged to plan and deliver professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement and the system's effectiveness over time.

When asked about formalized cycles and timelines to evaluate all academic and organizational programs and services, interviews and artifacts revealed more informal ways of improving and refining programs and practices

that impact student learning. One internal stakeholder said, “We do not have much written down. Our students just know we are truly invested in them. The success that the system has enjoyed is due to traditions and commitment to our students, rather than formal procedures and processes in place systemwide.” The team acknowledges the success the system has enjoyed but encourages formalizing processes, practices and procedures to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning. Implementing more systematic and systemic actions should cause practices and programs to become deeply ingrained and protected throughout the culture and operations of the school system.

Having a caring, supportive, well-managed learning environment with effective resource management and an on-going process to ensure that curriculum is aligned to state standards are the center of success for Worth County Schools. The Engagement Review Team members listened carefully to the stakeholders of the schools and appreciate their willingness to share information about strengths and challenges. With nine of the Standards already at the “Impact” level, the system can now continually focus on ensuring these desired practices and programs are deeply ingrained and protected throughout the culture and operations of the system. For increased success and educational excellence for all students, a systemwide instructional framework that is continuously monitored and adjusted to meet individual learner’s needs and the system’s expectations; meaningful stakeholder engagement and transparent, two-way communication with all internal and external stakeholder groups; and formalized processes and procedures to provide consistency and to assess programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning need to be sustained and become ingrained in all aspects of the school system.

Next Steps

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

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

Team Roster

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

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Dr. Cheryl Allread, Lead Evaluator	<p>Cheryl Allread's career spans over 47 years. She retired from Marion County Schools in South Carolina after having taught math and science for seven years, serving as principal for 11 years, as assistant superintendent for instruction for 11 years, and as district superintendent for seven years. After retirement from 36 years working in Marion County, she began working as a consultant with the S.C. State Department of Education, serving as liaison for low-performing schools/Palmetto Priority Schools. She also conducted academic audits, served as principal mentor, and served as a leadership coach in instructional supervision. Dr. Allread currently works as a Lead Evaluator for AdvancED in schools and systems across the United States and internationally, as well as continuing to work as a consultant with schools and systems in instructional supervision.</p>
Mr. David Buddenbaum	<p>David Buddenbaum has been in education for 25 years as a teacher, technology specialist, assistant principal and principal at the elementary and middle school levels. He currently is the assistant superintendent of schools for Hart County Charter System in Hartwell, Georgia. In that position, he coordinates the curriculum implementation process and the professional development activities for middle and high school and leads the system charter initiative and the College and Career Academy. Before coming to Hart County, he worked in Rockdale County, Georgia for 18 years as a teacher, coach, technology specialist and administrator. Mr. Buddenbaum has a bachelor's degree from Ball State University in elementary education with a minor in special education, a master's degree from Walden University in technology instruction, and a specialist degree from Lincoln Memorial University in education leadership and supervision.</p>
Dr. Scot Sweeting	<p>Scot Sweeting is coordinator of K- 12 science curriculum and new teacher induction for Thomas County School System in Thomasville, Georgia. In that position he coordinates the implementation of all science curriculum and instruction, as well as professional development activities, for all new teachers at three elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and one charter school. Dr. Sweeting holds a doctorate degree and a master's degree in educational leadership from Valdosta State University and a bachelor's degree in science education from Florida State University. Scott Sweeting has 17 years of experience as a secondary science teacher and two years as an instructional coordinator at the system level. He is currently serving on his school system's AdvancED leadership team.</p>

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
<p>Ms. Maxine Morgan</p>	<p>Maxine Morgan has been an educator for 34 years. Presently, she teaches sixth grade language arts at Mandarin Middle School in Duval County Public School System in Jacksonville, Florida. Mrs. Morgan has taught grades one through eight, as well as designed, developed and facilitated the county’s teacher alternative certification program for the past 10 years. In addition, Ms. Morgan has taught ELL classes for recertification in various counties across Florida for the past four years. Prior to returning to the classroom 10 years ago, Maxine worked at the Schultz Center for Teachers and Leaders, designing classes and training teacher leaders in the areas of literacy, reading and best practices. She also spearheaded such projects as organizing the summer principal institute for learning, a three-day conference for 150 principals. Mrs. Morgan earned her bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Winthrop College in Rock Hill, South Carolina and her master’s degree in elementary education with an emphasis on literacy at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, Florida.</p>
<p>Ms. Pam Nail</p>	<p>Pam Nail joined the Douglas County School System in Douglasville, Georgia in 1989 as a teacher. She taught for eight years before transitioning to an assistant principal position. After five years as assistant principal, she became an elementary school principal. Five years later, Ms. Nail became elementary executive director and eventually the executive director for K-12. For the last eight years, Ms. Nail has served Douglas County as the chief academic officer and will be the assistant superintendent for federal programs and special projects in 2019-2020.</p>

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AdvancED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization serving the largest community of education professionals in the world. Founded on more than 100 years of work in continuous improvement, AdvancED combines the knowledge and expertise of a research institute, the skills of a management consulting firm and the passion of a grassroots movement for educational change to empower Pre-K-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.

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