Report of the External Review Team
for
Homewood City School District

450 Dale Avenue
Homewood
AL 35209-2037
US

Dr. William T Cleveland
Superintendent

Date: March 8, 2015 - March 11, 2015

AdvancED®

Table of Contents

This report is pending final approval by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

© 2015 Advance Education, Inc. All rights reserved unless otherwise granted by written agreement.   Page 3

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

Homewood City School District, Homewood, Alabama, hosted an AdvancED External Review on March 8-11, 2015. The External Review Team consisted of four members, three from Alabama, and one from Florida. Team Members brought experience in classroom instruction, school leadership, and system level administration to their tasks. In addition, Team Members had considerable experience serving on school and system teams throughout the United States.

Preparation for the review included a virtual team meeting roughly three weeks before arrival on site. All Team Members completed required training and were certified in the eleot™ protocol. Prior to arrival in Homewood, team members reviewed the system and school Accreditation Reports. In addition, Team Members utilized the school and district websites to review documentation helpful in understanding the district Accreditation Report. All team members had access to the website containing the system's accreditation artifacts. These were organized by Standard and Indicator. Team Members were further able to familiarize themselves with much of the documentation supporting the system's Internal Review as they studied the Accreditation Report, interviewed stakeholders and conducted the on-site review process.

The Lead Evaluator had numerous contacts by telephone and email with the district contact prior to the review

to finalize the schedule and the logistics of the review process. Team Members visited all five of the schools in the district.

The team commends the Homewood City School District staff and community for their hospitality, transparency, and preparation for all aspects of the review. The system utilized the district Strategic Plan, which was updated in 2011, as a cornerstone for their review. Each school conducted its own Internal Review; afterwards, representatives of the school committees joined system staff to analyze student achievement and survey data, review artifacts, and make determinations about Homewood City School System's level of performance on the various diagnostics.

The team appreciates both the attention to detail that characterized the entire review process and also the system's efforts to be transparent. The Accreditation Report was candid in its assessment of the system's strength and challenges.

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.

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

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Superintendents	1
Board Members	4
Administrators	19
Instructional Staff	37
Students	54
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	18
Total	**133**

Results

Teaching and Learning Impact

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	3.00	2.69
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	2.00	2.55
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.75	2.54
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.00	2.70
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	2.00	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	3.00	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	3.00	2.67

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.00	2.97
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	2.00	2.46
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	3.00	2.57
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.00	2.60
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.00	2.63

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.00	2.67
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	2.75	2.48
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	2.00	2.14
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	3.00	2.45
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	3.00	2.85

Student Performance Diagnostic

The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of
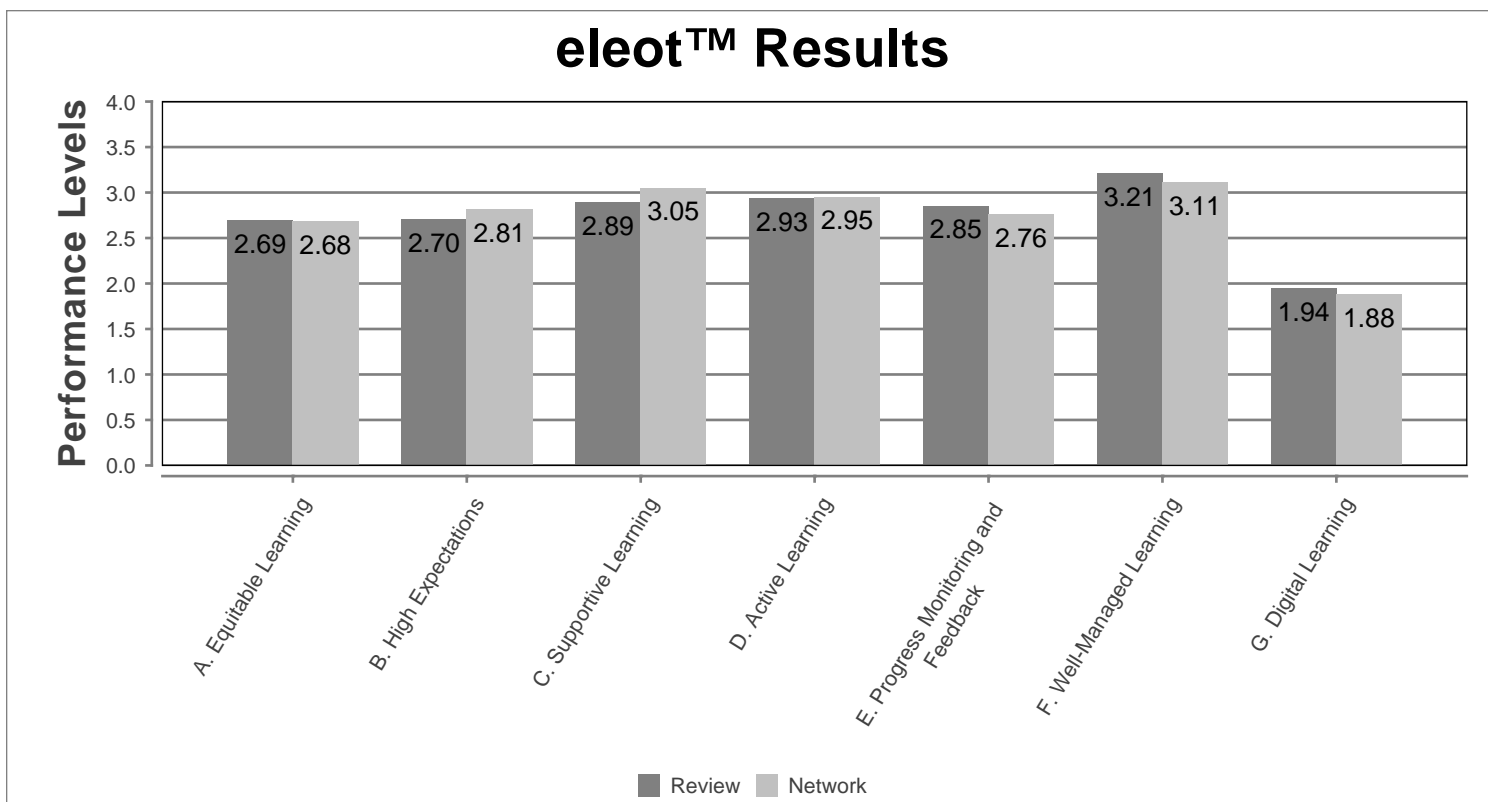
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	3.00	3.32
Test Administration	4.00	3.62
Equity of Learning	2.00	2.52
Quality of Learning	4.00	3.06

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

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

eleot™ Results

Environment	Review	Network
A. Equitable Learning	2.69	2.68
B. High Expectations	2.70	2.81
C. Supportive Learning	2.89	3.05
D. Active Learning	2.93	2.95
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback	2.85	2.76
F. Well-Managed Learning	3.21	3.11
G. Digital Learning	1.94	1.88

During the external review, Team Members completed 52 eleot™ classroom observations in the five schools within the system. Results of observations in the classroom learning environments throughout the school district are ranked below from highest to lowest. Two scores are listed--the first being the results from the observations conducted by the Team and the second (in parentheses) being the average scores from the AdvancED Network (AEN).

Well Managed Learning Environment--3.21 (3.11)
Active Learning Environment--2.92 (2.94)
Supportive Learning Environment--2.89 (3.05)
Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment--2.85 (2.76)
High Expectations Learning Environment--2.70 (2.81)
Equitable Learning Environment--2.69 (2.68)
Digital Learning Environment--1.94 (1.88)

The Well-Managed Learning Environment received the highest rating of all the environments assessed during the observations. Students were often observed speaking and interacting respectfully with teachers and peers. It was apparent that classroom procedures, routines, and rules had been established, practiced, and supported. Students consistently followed the established protocols and practices resulting in well managed environments.

The Active Learning Environment received the second highest rating. The Team observed that students had several opportunities to engage in discussions with the teacher and other students, and to actively engage in the learning process. Evident to a lesser degree, was the opportunity for students to make connections from content to real life expectations.

Another environment that received a rating indicating the display of student actions consistently was the Supportive Learning Environment. Through their actions and through their statements during conversations with team members, students demonstrated a positive attitude about the classroom and about learning. Teachers and fellow classmates often provided support and assistance to enhance understanding of the content and to accomplish tasks and assignments.

The overall Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment rating exceeded the AEN rating. Students were observed demonstrating and verbalizing understanding of the lesson content. Less evident in the observations, were opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback, and student responses to teacher feedback to improve understanding

The overall rating in the High Expectations Environment was 2.70. The team found most students were tasked with activities that were challenging and attainable. Students were aware of the high expectations established by the teacher and worked hard to meet these expectations. However, the use of exemplars of high quality work was not as evident during the observations. The Team also observed that questions and responses requiring high order thinking skills were less evident.

The Equitable Learning Environment had an overall rating of 2.69, The Team observed only a limited amount of differentiated learning opportunities and activities specifically designed to address the individual needs of students. The Team did conclude that students had equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology and support, and were knowledgeable that rules and consequences were fair, clear, and consistently applied. The Team observed limited opportunities for students to learn about their own and other's background/cultures/differences. This result is reflective of equity challenges identified by the school

system.

The area receiving the lowest rating was the Digital Learning Environment with an overall score of 1.94. Even though the team observed outstanding student use of digital tools in some classrooms, there was not pervasive evidence of student use of digital tools/technology 1) to gather, evaluate and/or use information for learning; 2) to conduct research, solve problems and/or create original works for learning; or 3) to communicate and work collaboratively for learning.

The classroom observations served as a confirmation for the External Review Team of the materials and information provided during the review process. The results from the classroom observations provide a snapshot of learner centered student behaviors and actions. The ratings of the seven learning environments indicate a strong emphasis on the teaching and learning processes in classrooms throughout the system.. The lower ratings on some of the descriptor items suggest that the district should focus on increasing the opportunities for individualized learning through differentiated instruction, the use of exemplars, expand students learning about diverse backgrounds/cultures/differences, and the incorporation of opportunities for students to utilize digital tools/technologies to research, to collaborate, and to think critically and creatively.

Homewood City School District clearly recognizes the increasing diversity within the district, and the growing need to address differentiated instruction to meet the changing needs of the students served. Observations and school visits revealed a lack of consistency in instructional processes and in the monitoring for consistent instructional processes at all levels district wide. Average scores from observations supported the indicator ratings along with the opportunities for improvement and improvement priorities.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	2.56	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	13.46%	32.69%	50.00%	3.85%
2.	3.44	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	50.00%	46.15%	1.92%	1.92%
3.	3.06	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	30.77%	51.92%	9.62%	7.69%
4.	1.69	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	7.69%	15.38%	15.38%	61.54%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.69						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.17	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	28.85%	61.54%	7.69%	1.92%
2.	2.96	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	25.00%	50.00%	21.15%	3.85%
3.	2.02	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	0.00%	38.46%	25.00%	36.54%
4.	2.79	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	17.31%	48.08%	30.77%	3.85%
5.	2.56	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	15.38%	44.23%	21.15%	19.23%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.70						

This report is pending final approval by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	2.94	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	21.15%	53.85%	23.08%	1.92%
2.	3.02	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	28.85%	50.00%	15.38%	5.77%
3.	2.75	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	19.23%	46.15%	25.00%	9.62%
4.	2.98	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	30.77%	40.38%	25.00%	3.85%
5.	2.77	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	21.15%	46.15%	21.15%	11.54%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.89						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.02	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	40.38%	28.85%	23.08%	7.69%
2.	2.60	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	28.85%	26.92%	19.23%	25.00%
3.	3.17	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	34.62%	51.92%	9.62%	3.85%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.93						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback				%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**		**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	2.77	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning		13.46%	51.92%	32.69%	1.92%
2.	2.71	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding		19.23%	42.31%	28.85%	9.62%
3.	3.12	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content		30.77%	53.85%	11.54%	3.85%
4.	2.94	Understands how her/his work is assessed		34.62%	34.62%	21.15%	9.62%
5.	2.69	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback		19.23%	44.23%	23.08%	13.46%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.85							

F. Well-Managed Learning				%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**		**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.23	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers		38.46%	48.08%	11.54%	1.92%
2.	3.27	Follows classroom rules and works well with others		40.38%	48.08%	9.62%	1.92%
3.	3.17	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities		40.38%	44.23%	7.69%	7.69%
4.	3.04	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities		44.23%	26.92%	17.31%	11.54%
5.	3.33	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences		42.31%	48.08%	9.62%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.21							

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	2.31	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	25.00%	25.00%	5.77%	44.23%
2.	1.75	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	15.38%	13.46%	1.92%	69.23%
3.	1.77	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	13.46%	13.46%	9.62%	63.46%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.94						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Design, implement, and evaluate a structure to provide an adult advocate for every student.

(Indicators 3.9)

Evidence and Rationale

The AdvancED External Review Team found many opportunities for adults and students to interact and build relationships. Teachers and staff throughout the district are devoted to students and their success. We did not observe a systemic structure to ensure that every student has long-term interaction with a personal adult advocate.

A formal system to provide advisors (advocates) for each student will ensure that every student and family has a unique relationship with an adult outside of the classroom and/or administrative staff. The Advisor model can address communication, transition, and college-career planning areas of emphasis. This approach will foster school engagement for all.

Improvement Priority

Train all professional and support staff members in a rigorous, ongoing professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data to inform instruction, intervention, and system improvement.

(Indicators 3.5, 5.3)

Evidence and Rationale

Through observations, artifact review, interviews, and system presentations, the External Review Team found

evidence of a wealth of data and well-supported instruction. However, the External Review Team did not find a systemic approach to the use of data by all staff in all schools.

When the system drives and monitors the analysis and use of data, there will be consistency at all levels.

Opportunity for Improvement
Implement district quality control procedures that monitor the schools' consistent use of the systemic instructional process.
(Indicators 3.2, 3.11, 5.2)

Evidence and Rationale
While the External Review Team saw evidence of evaluation and monitoring of instruction at the school level, a system-level approach was not verified. Evidence from the eleot observations and school visits revealed a lack of consistency in instructional processes. The Team observed many outstanding instructional practices in the classrooms and recommends ensuring that these practices are utilized in all classrooms every day.

Implementing a system-wide monitoring process will ensure that all personnel within the system are effectively using instructional models. An example of this type of monitoring should include district walk-throughs in every school to verify a consistent instructional process at all levels to improve student learning.

Powerful Practice
Homewood City Schools focuses on student learning as well as system and school effectiveness and achievement, and regularly communicates this information to stakeholders.
(Indicators 3.6, 5.5)

Evidence and Rationale
Through interviews, district presentations, and artifact reviews, the External Review Team noted that teachers throughout the system inform students of learning expectations through utilization of clearly defined and student-friendly learning targets. In addition, the system has implemented standards-based report cards at the elementary level through fourth grade.

The successful implementation of clearly defined learning targets at all grade levels and for all subjects, as well as the effective communication of these targets to stakeholders, has led to overall student success at all levels.

Leadership Capacity

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	3.00	2.67
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	2.75	2.69
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	4.00	2.87
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.00	2.64

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	4.00	2.96
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	4.00	2.99
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	4.00	3.20
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	4.00	3.00
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	3.00	2.69

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	3.00	2.78

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

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

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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.43
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	4.00	3.12

Findings

Opportunity for Improvement

Implement district quality control procedures that monitor the schools' consistent use of the systemic instructional process.

(Indicators 3.2, 3.11, 5.2)

Evidence and Rationale

While the External Review Team saw evidence of evaluation and monitoring of instruction at the school level, a system-level approach was not verified. Evidence from the eleot observations and school visits revealed a lack of consistency in instructional processes. The Team observed many outstanding instructional practices in the classrooms and recommends ensuring that these practices are utilized in all classrooms every day.

Implementing a system-wide monitoring process will ensure that all personnel within the system are effectively using instructional models. An example of this type of monitoring should include district walk-throughs in every school to verify a consistent instructional process at all levels to improve student learning.

This report is pending final approval by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

Powerful Practice

A strong sense of leadership autonomy, fostered by trust, pride and mutual respect exists throughout the district.

(Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with the Superintendent and administrators verified that there is an expectation that individual areas of assigned responsibility will be achieved because there is collaboration, trust and open communication. Leadership expressed that their opinions are valued. There is a pervasive understanding and support of the district mission and goals for student achievement.

Understanding of individual roles and mutual respect are pervasive in the culture of collaboration, trust, and open communication, and continuous improvement is fostered.

Powerful Practice

The Superintendent and the Board of Education are unified in their adherence to ethical standards, laws, policies, regulations, and procedures to ensure effective fulfillment of rules and responsibilities.

(Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)

Evidence and Rationale

The External Review Team verified through the artifact review and interviews with all stakeholder groups that the Superintendent and Board of Education adhere to ethical standards, laws, and regulations.

Effective fulfillment of rules and responsibilities is enhanced by adherence to ethical standards, laws, policies, regulations, and procedures.

Powerful Practice

The shared values, commitment, and caring culture of learning within the Homewood City School District, produces rich collaboration and creates a strong sense of community among all stakeholders.

(Indicators 1.3, 2.4)

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with all stakeholder groups verified the strong, unified support for student achievement throughout the district. The financial resources, volunteer support, and enrichment opportunities provided to students is extensive. The Board of Education provides extensive opportunities for employee and student growth and enrichment, in the classroom and beyond. Teachers and building administrators stated that an identified need is met quickly to facilitate meeting the needs of students.

Support/involvement of community, parents, teachers, and administration creates a unified and cohesive whole that is greater than the individual parts.

Resource Utilization

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

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

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

Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	2.00	2.98
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	2.00	2.98
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	4.00	3.05
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	3.00	2.67

This report is pending final approval by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	2.75	2.82
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.00	2.64
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.75	2.65
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	3.00	2.64

Findings

Improvement Priority

Address the need for a new plan to be developed for updating, maintaining, and refreshing technology infrastructure and equipment since it has been determined that the initial plan is unfeasible.

(Indicators 4.6)

Evidence and Rationale

The system's self-assessment identified the need for a sustainable plan for technology updates as an area in need of improvement. Observations made by the External Review Team in visits to schools verified that a need exists for a systemic approach to addressing technology needs and changes supporting consistent opportunities across the system. Interviews with stakeholders elicited information indicating that progress is being made in this area but that it is still a concern. It is incumbent upon the leadership of Homewood City Schools to design a strategy that will provide the needed support to carry the system forward and allow it to continue to provide its learners with an environment aimed toward future-proofing and designed to promote innovation and success.

Providing students and teachers with resources and tools ubiquitous to a 21st Century learning environment is essential to preparing graduates to be successful in college and careers. Holding this ideal as a priority will ensure that Homewood City Schools will be able to continue its tradition of providing this essential advantage to its students.

Opportunity for Improvement

Provide staff to support technology integration in instruction.

(Indicators 4.1)

Evidence and Rationale

While it is recognized that staff is currently in place to address this need, it does not appear to be entirely

sufficient to meet the demands of facilities and stakeholders. The system's self assessment identified the need for revisions to be made to job descriptions for technicians and technology specialists indicating that allocation of these human resources may need to be adjusted. The External Review Team observed in visits to schools that a need exists for additional or different support to facilitate technology integration and needs created by the utilization of technology resources and instructional tools. As the population of the system grows and expands, and as resources and tools are added to the inventory, this need will certainly become more imperative.

Utilization of resources and tools inherent in a 21st Century learning environment is only as impactful as its integration is authentic. Achieving high levels of authentic integration requires extensive and continual training and ongoing embedded support provided by the system.

Powerful Practice
The system's implementation of policies and procedures to prioritize the caretaking and improvement of learning environments as well as services and equipment supporting those learning environments demonstrates that this is a priority for Homewood City Schools.
(Indicators 4.3)

Evidence and Rationale
The system's self assessment identified facility, service, and equipment maintenance as an area of strength. This assertion was borne out in observations made by the External Review Team in visits to schools. Interviews with stakeholders also verified that providing a positive learning environment is a consistent priority across the system. The leadership of Homewood City Schools has expended funds in all locations to address areas of concern and has plans for future expansion of educational facilities and/or rezoning for optimization of building capacity utilization to meet growth needs predicted by trend data.

Provision of a positive learning environment has a significant impact on the educational experience of both teachers and students. The system demonstrates through expenditures, actions, and words that high value is placed on the safety, cleanliness, and health impacts of the learning environments provided to stakeholders.

Conclusion

The Homewood City School District governing body functions responsibly and has provided leadership by developing a long-range, comprehensive plan for continuous improvement of the system. Homewood City Schools has been involved in strategic planning since 1994. They have created five year plans with strategies and plans to achieve these strategies with a timeline and assigned district personnel. By engaging internal and external stakeholders in the development of a district Strategic Plan, the leadership of the school system has fostered a culture and climate that supports continuous improvement. The system maintains a solid financial footing, and enjoys strong local funding and community support.

Respect is clearly evident between the School Board and the district leadership. The devotion to students is evident throughout the system. The Superintendent models a love for students and a personal interest in their success. The mantra heard repeatedly is, "Come and stay with us in Homewood City Schools and you WILL be successful!"

Countless resources are poured into the lives of students with outstanding results. Graduates of Homewood have endless opportunities to become exemplary leaders in all arenas. The philosophy of broad experience as a foundation for education is apparent and authentic. Support for these opportunities is clearly evident through strong community support and by the seventy five percent of teachers who volunteer to sponsor, coach, and support extra-curricular activities for students.

Every child fortunate enough to enter the schools in Homewood will be empowered and supported for success. As the system encounters challenges with growth, the vision remains to see every child reach his or her unique potential.

The district has clearly refined learning targets that inform parents and students of learning expectations. In addition, the district has implemented standards based report cards at the elementary level through fourth grade.

The system demonstrates through expenditures, actions, and words that high value is placed on the safety, cleanliness, and health impacts of the learning environments provided to stakeholders. The leadership of Homewood City Schools has expended funds in all locations to address areas of concern and has plans for future expansion of educational facilities and/or rezoning for optimization of building capacity utilization to meet growth needs predicted by trend data.

Homewood City School District faces many challenges in addressing the needs of the increasingly diverse and growing student population served. The district has faced declining state funding since 2008, and a cap on local funding by state law. There is an increase in enrollment fostered by new/expanded homes and rental property. There is a mobility trend for more students and an increase in special population students.

The External Review Team noted a need to address equity of learning among the lowest performing subgroups. Parents interviewed expressed a need to address the addition of honors courses to enhance

college credit offerings to a larger population. The External Review Team noted a lack of systemic, systematic processes within Homewood City School District. The Team found a system of schools, rather than a school system.   Addressing the differentiation of instruction, systematic monitoring of instructional processes, and expanding the training for data related to evaluation, interpretation, and the use of date to inform instruction, intervention, and system improvement, should assist in this challenge. The district identified a need for improved communication with parent stakeholders. The External Review Team addressed this concern and identified multiple avenues of communication with all stakeholder groups in use throughout the district. The district should examine ways to improve dialogue with parents, as some parents did express that a gap in two way communication exists. Parents interviewed stated that they are well informed by the avenues of communication in use, but would welcome greater dialogue. Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostics reflected also reflected this need.

The External Review Team identified many programs throughout the district by which teachers and staff support students and their success. The Team did not find a system wide program that provides an adult advocate for each child. Provision for a formal advocacy program will strength the systems' efforts to meet the individual needs of each student in attaining their potential.

The system's self-assessment identified the need for a sustainable plan for technology updates as an area in need of improvement. It is incumbent upon the leadership of Homewood City Schools to design a strategy that will provide the needed support to carry the system forward and allow it to continue to provide its learners with an environment aimed toward future-proofing and designed to promote innovation and success.

Providing students and teachers with resources and tools ubiquitous to a 21st Century learning environment is essential to preparing graduates to be successful in college and careers. These efforts must be ongoing, and supported by training for all employees, to ensure the greatest impact on student learning and teacher effectiveness.

The improvement priorities identified by the External Review Team are designed to focus on increasing the systematic use of data by all staff in all schools, to provide consistency and strengthen the analysis and use of data. While important activities to address the needs and challenges are in place, systemic and sustained processes must be instituted to ensure that instructional approaches are consistent through all grades.

The development and implementation of a sustainable technology plan to address the resources and tools necessary for students and teachers, and to ensure that technology is totally integrated into the instructional process is vital to preparing Homewood students for the future.

Development of a district wide program addressing that each child has an adult advocate, will ensure that students have at least one adult within the system that serves as a long term advocate. It will also enhance school engagement for all students and address student needs outside those of guidance services.

It should be noted that the identified Improvement Priorities are included in and support increased student achievement, and provide validation of the system's own Internal Review process.

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:

- Address the need for a new plan to be developed for updating, maintaining, and refreshing technology infrastructure and equipment since it has been determined that the initial plan is unfeasible.
- Design, implement, and evaluate a structure to provide an adult advocate for every student.
- Train all professional and support staff members in a rigorous, ongoing professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data to inform instruction, intervention, and system improvement.

This report is pending final approval by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

© 2015 Advance Education, Inc. All rights reserved unless otherwise granted by written agreement.   Page 31

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	299.39	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	278.57	274.14
Leadership Capacity	356.25	296.08
Resource Utilization	268.75	286.32

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

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

Addenda

Individual Institution Results (Self-reported)

Institution Name	Teaching and Learning Impact	Leadership Capacity	Resource Utilization	Overall IEQ Score
Edgewood Elementary School	290.48	327.27	314.29	305.13
Hall-Kent Elementary School	300.00	345.45	314.29	315.38
Homewood High School	304.76	363.64	314.29	323.08
Homewood Middle School	314.29	363.64	314.29	328.21
Shades Cahaba Elementary School	314.29	354.55	271.43	317.95

This report is pending final approval by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

© 2015 Advance Education, Inc. All rights reserved unless otherwise granted by written agreement.   Page 33

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Virginia J Massey	Mrs. Virginia J. Massey, currently serves as a Lead Evaluator for both school and district reviews. She previously worked in the Hillsborough County School District in Florida, having served thirty-three years as a high school principal, middle school principal, high school assistant principal for curriculum, department chair and social science teacher. Virginia has degrees from Florida State University and the University of South Florida. While teaching full time, Virginia served on many accreditation teams. Since 2000, she has lead many school teams and has served as lead for district team visits in nine states.
Ms. Carol Martin	As an educator of 30 years in Alabama Carol Martin has the same enthusiasm for our career as when she began! Ms. Martin's career began in her high school English classroom; later she became the Principal of her own high school, served as a high school administrator for 18 years, and now enjoys a district leadership role of Director of Instruction and Intervention in Sylacauga City Schools. She works with PreK-12 in her school system, leading Assessment, RTI, Accountablity, Professional Development, and other areas. Ms. Martin's Ed.S. degree is in Educational Leadership. She is a Communications major who enjoys presentations and working with teams. Ms. Martin has organized, led, and served on SACS and AdvancED team processes in several states, Model School teams, and Middle and High Schools That Work teams. She loves to share experiences and enthusiasm with others as they focus on improving schools for all students.
Mrs. Maureen Ryff	Mrs. Maureen Ryff is a retired secondary school social studies instructor and administrator. Mrs. Ryff holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in American History and French, and a Master's Degree in Political Science from the University of Wyoming. Her administrative endorsements include principal for grades K-12 and curriculum director. Mrs. Ryff taught social studies and French for 30 years at the middle and high school levels and served as a high school principal for 10 years. She earned several awards for excellence in education. She is currently the State Director of the Wyoming Academic Decathlon program. She is a member of the Wyoming AdvancED State Council and serves as a lead evaluator for AdvancED. She has led accreditation visits to schools and districts throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Katrina Bowling	Katrina Bowling attended Troy State University earning a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and went on to teach in Montgomery for five years at Hayneville Road Elementary School. She moved to north Alabama and gained nine years of experience as an instructional leader and administrator directing the private preschool her children attended and earning her Master's degree in Educational Leadership and Administration from the University of South Alabama. After her children all entered school, she re-entered the public education arena at Rainbow Elementary School in the Madison City School district where she served as a first grade teacher for 2 ½ years. During her tenure there, she took an active role in the school serving as grade level chairperson, new teacher mentor, supervising teacher for student teachers, Technology Committee member, PST member, SACS Committee leader, Textbook Adoption Committee member, interview team member, Budget Committee member, and Schoolwide Discipline Plan Committee member. Mrs. Bowling was chosen midyear in her third year in Madison City to create a new district position and serve as Instructional Technology Coach. During that time she was involved on a leadership level with curriculum, technology tools, system goals and priorities, and professional development needs and processes. Also during this time period she served as Interim Assistant Principal at Horizon Elementary School and then as Interim Principal. She later became the Assistant Principal at Horizon and served there until being asked to step in as Acting Principal at Heritage Elementary School for the duration of the principal's extended medical leave. Upon leaving Heritage, Mrs. Bowling became the district's Technology Coordinator and served in that capacity until leaving Madison City to join the team in Enterprise City Schools where she currently serves as the district's Coordinator of Instructional Support. Mrs. Bowling has created and regularly facilitates online professional development courses for educators and administrators across the state through eLearning of Alabama. Additionally, she is a certified and experienced AdvancED District Accreditation External Review Team Member. She has been the recipient of the coveted Marbury Award for Technology Innovation from the Alabama State Department of Education and her innovations in educational technology have been featured nationally in both an EMC2 whitepaper and an Ed Tech Magazine article entitled "The Way to Go." She has presented at state and national conferences including ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), AETA (Alabama Educational Technology Association), and ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education). Mrs. Bowling was recently inducted into the Delta Kappa Gamma International Society for Key Women Educators. Throughout her extensive career in the field of education, Mrs. Bowling's passion for children and bringing to fulfillment the potential inside each one has only grown. She thrives on both the rewards and challenges inherent in being an educational leader and revels in finding ways to refine and improve the educational process for both students and teachers.
Mrs. Cathy Ellison	Cathy Ellison has served as the System Accreditation Coordinator for Geneva City Schools since 2005. She is also the ASSIST coordinator and assistant Technology Coordinator for the system. She has worked with AdvancED (formerly SACS) since 2000 where she has served as chair of numerous school visits and one system visit to Arkansas. She has co-chaired numerous system visits throughout Alabama. Mrs. Ellison has a Masters of Education from Troy State University and is currently pursuing her Doctor of Education in Curriculum Studies at the University of West Florida. She teaches English at Geneva High School where she also serves as the school's Interventionist. She has taught in Geneva since 1996, and has been in education since 1991.

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.

References

- Alwin, L. (2002). The will and the way of data use. School Administrator, 59(11), 11.
- Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y. (2010). Teachers' mathematical knowledge, cognitive activation in the classroom, and student progress. American Educational Research Journal, 47(1), 133-180.
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. (2012). Shared purpose: the golden thread? London: CIPD.
- Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S. (2008). An investigation of the impacts of teacher-driven professional development. Teacher Education Quarterly, 35(2), 134-154.
- Conley, D.T. (2007). Redefining college readiness (Vol. 3). Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center.
- Datnow, A., Park, V., & Wohlstetter, P. (2007). Achieving with data: How high-performing school systems use data to improve instruction for elementary students. Los Angeles, CA: Center on Educational Governance, USC.
- Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R. (2005). Data driven decision making in Southwestern Pennsylvania school districts. Working paper. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- Ding, C. & Sherman, H. (2006). Teaching effectiveness and student achievement: Examining the relationship. Educational Research Quarterly, 29 (4), 40-51.
- Doyle, D. P. (2003). Data-driven decision making: Is it the mantra of the month or does it have staying power? T.H.E. Journal, 30(10), 19-21.
- Feuerstein, A., & Opfer, V. D. (1998). School board chairmen and school superintendents: An analysis of perceptions concerning special interest groups and educational governance. Journal of School Leadership, 8, 373-398.
- Fink, D., & Brayman, C. (2006). School leadership succession and the challenges of change. Educational Administration Quarterly, 42 (62), 61-89.
- Greene, K. (1992). Models of school-board policy-making. Educational Administration Quarterly, 28 (2), 220-236.
- Horng, E., Klasik, D., & Loeb, S. (2010). Principal time-use and school effectiveness. American Journal of Education 116, (4) 492-523.
- Lafee, S. (2002). Data-driven districts. School Administrator, 59(11), 6-7, 9-10, 12, 14-15.
- Leithwood, K., & Sun, J. (2012). The Nature and effects of transformational school leadership: A meta-analytic review of unpublished research. Educational Administration Quarterly, 48 (387). 388-423.
- Marks, H., Louis, K.S., & Printy, S. (2002). The capacity for organizational learning: Implications for pedagogy and student achievement. In K. Leithwood (Ed.), Organizational learning and school improvement (p. 239-266). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- McIntire, T. (2002). The administrator's guide to data-driven decision making. Technology and Learning, 22(11), 18-33.
- Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L. (2003). Examination of resource allocation in education: connecting spending to student performance. Austin, TX: SEDL.