

# Report of the External Review Team for Clay County Board of Education

1111 East Commerce Street  
Fort Gaines  
GA 39851  
US

**Mrs. Johnnie Grimsley  
Superintendent**

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# Table of Contents

Introduction ..... 4

Results ..... 9

    Teaching and Learning Impact ..... 9

        Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning ..... 10

        Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement ..... 11

        Student Performance Diagnostic ..... 11

        Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) ..... 13

            eleot™ Data Summary ..... 16

        Findings ..... 19

    Leadership Capacity ..... 20

        Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction ..... 21

        Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership ..... 21

        Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic ..... 22

        Findings ..... 22

    Resource Utilization ..... 25

        Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems ..... 25

        Findings ..... 26

Conclusion ..... 27

    Accreditation Recommendation ..... 29

Addenda ..... 30

    Individual Institution Results (Self-reported) ..... 30

    Team Roster ..... 31

    Next Steps ..... 33

    About AdvancED ..... 34

    References ..... 35

# Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Use of Diagnostic Tools

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

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

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

## Index of Education Quality

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

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

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

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

## Benchmark Data

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

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

## Powerful Practices

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

## Opportunities for Improvement

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

## Improvement Priorities

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

## The Review

The five member External Review Team composed of two out-of-state and three in-state professional educators reviewed evidence from Sunday afternoon through Wednesday, January 11-14, 2015. Clay County experienced two changes during the preparation stage: 1) the visit was rescheduled to allow for pertinent work to be completed and 2) the Lead Evaluator was replaced a week before the visit for medical reasons. The new Lead Evaluator was welcomed by the system leadership in a phone conference. This was followed by email correspondence with the team. A seamless transition occurred enabling the visit to be very successful.

Team member assignments to domains and classroom visitations were given. The five members were also assigned seven varied indicators to explore and assess the quality of evidence provided by the system. This method provided team members an overview of every standard and assured that evidence was examined with fidelity. All evidence investigation was completed on-site because it was not in digital format. The team also examined other artifacts and collected data from interviews and the school visits. The team was graciously greeted by the superintendent and her associate prior to beginning the Sunday agenda. Team training and planning for Monday's interviews completed the evening.

The Clay County External Review Team conducted 20 classroom observations at the three sites, Clay County

Elementary, Clay County Middle School, and Clay County 9th Grade Academy which are all on one campus. Due to the very small number of students and classes, the team could not see every class within the time frame. It is to be noted that following interviews on Monday, there was a concern regarding the addition of the 9th Grade Academy in recent years. This had not been communicated to AdvancED. Since there were questions regarding the observations at the 9th Grade Academy, clarification was made by the Georgia State Office for AdvancED. The team was directed to include those classrooms and use the eleot™ tool for those observations. Since the 9th Grade Academy needs to be registered as a specific school and the Clay County Board of Education has voted to expand into a high school, the Georgia State Office will send the necessary paper work for the system to register the school and be in compliance with AdvancED assurances.

The External Review Team interviewed 110 stakeholders including 32 parent and community members. For a school system of 306 students, this local support was exceptional. From the community stakeholder interview, a local committee spoke favorably of wanting to partner with the system in its continuous improvement process.

The External Review Team appreciated the warm hospitality of the Clay County system and community. All stakeholders are to be commended for their diligence in completing the accreditation process and for their zeal to seek renewal of AdvancED accreditation. As Clay County Leadership stated, "We know we have more to do and we are not where we want to be; however, we are not where we used to be."

Stakeholders were interviewed by 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 evidence 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	5
Administrators	2
Instructional Staff	17
Support Staff	5
Students	48
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>



# Results

## Teaching and Learning Impact

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	2.80	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.	3.00	2.55
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.20	2.54
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.40	2.70
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	2.20	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.00	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.40	2.67

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.00	2.97
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	3.20	2.46
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	3.00	2.57
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	3.00	2.60
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	2.60	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.	3.20	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.	3.00	2.48
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	2.00	2.14
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	2.00	2.45
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	2.00	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

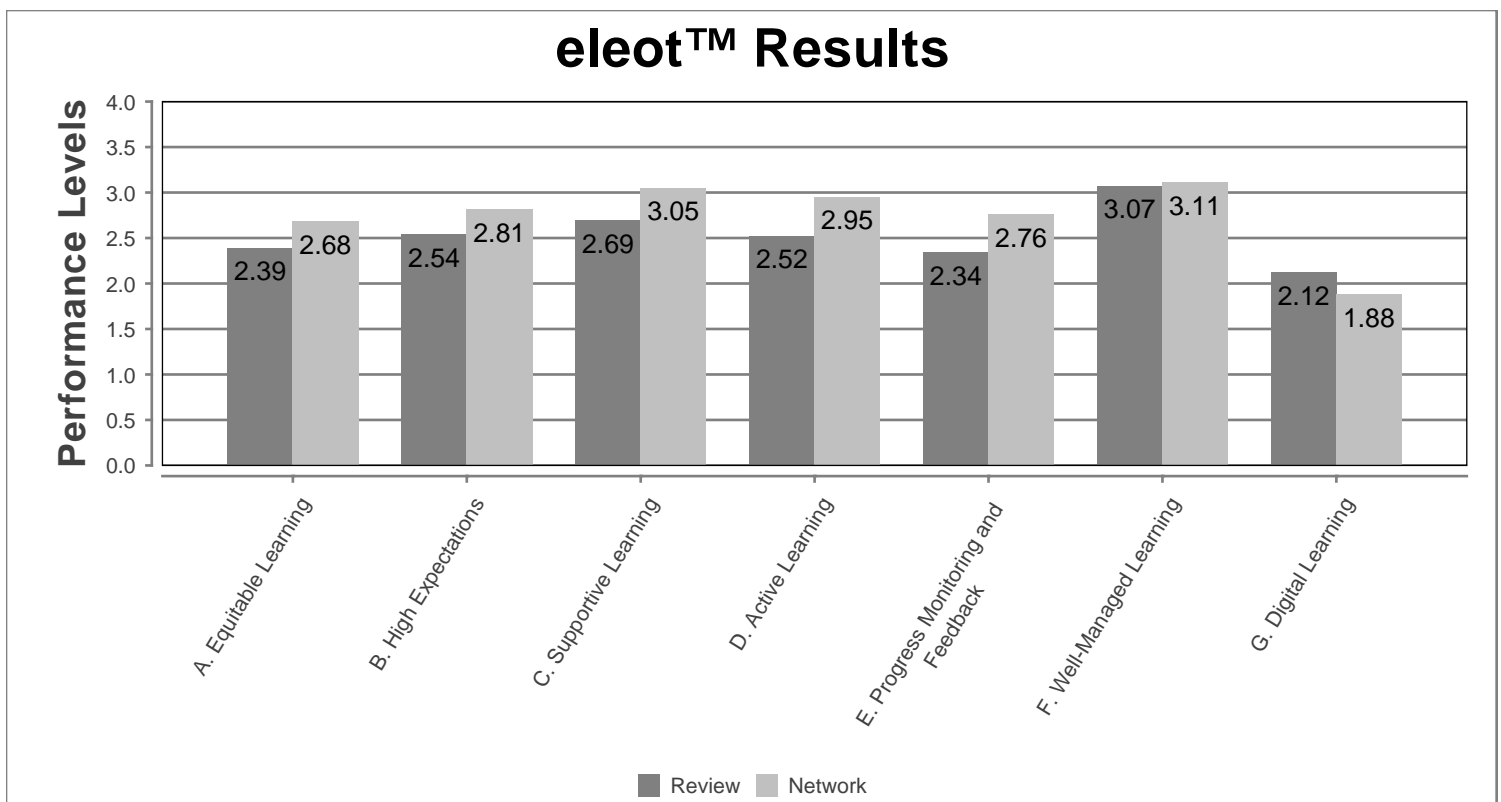
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

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

## Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

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



The Clay County External Review Team, consisting of five members, conducted 20 classroom observations at Clay County Elementary, Clay County Middle School, and Clay County 9th Grade Academy. Two team members visited the middle school and 9th grade academy, while three team members visited the elementary school. Team members visited all classes that were available within the allotted time.

The AdvancED Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) was used for all observations. These observations were conducted by certified eleot™ team members for a minimum of twenty minutes in each classroom, providing ample opportunity to assess learners in the seven environments. Clay County Schools' overall ratings exceeded the AdvancED Network (AEN) in Digital Learning Environment, with a rating of 2.12 compared to the AEN rating of 1.88, although the score was the lowest of the environments.

Well-Managed Learning Environment received the highest score of 3.07 compared to the AEN score of 3.11. It was reflective of the respect shown in each classroom. Students know the rules, behavioral expectations, and consequences. It was clearly evident in one Kindergarten class where the class was always called "our family" and based their behavior and respect on "how we treat and care for our family members".

Supportive Learning Environment earned a rating of 2.69 compared to an AEN of 3.05. Teachers and classroom aides offered assistance throughout the observations.

High Expectations Environment received a rating of 2.54 compared to an AEN of 2.81. Teachers have high expectations for their students but it is not always evident in the challenge level of the tasks. There was an overall level of quality teaching but rigorous and challenging work and tasks were not consistent among the classes. Most questioning was at a lower level of critical thinking. The schools are focusing on writing across the curriculum which has shown improvement in writing skills.

Active Learning Environment received a rating of 2.52 compared to the AEN of 2.95. Students in some classes were actively engaged in group work but this was not observed across most classes. Clay County students were compliant to teacher behavior expectations and did the work they were assigned. As teachers begin to design lessons that promote student discussions and teamwork, there will be opportunities for increased engagement and application.

Equitable Learning Environment had an average of 2.39 compared to the AEN of 2.68. Teachers have begun to receive professional courses in differentiation; however, there is a wide range of implementation levels with many classes having the same work to do. There was no evidence of a class having accelerated work for high achieving students.

Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment rated a 2.34 compared to the 2.76 AEN rating. Interviews of system personnel and teachers revealed that each student has a progress folder and assessment results are discussed with students including goal setting, but this was not observed by team members. When given feedback, students attempted to improve their work.

As the External Review Team shared observation experiences and then examined the ratings that resulted from the eleot™ observations, new discussions arose noting correlations between the eleot™ rating outcomes and those of the standard indicators. There was a common thread that linked the improvement priorities that focused on establishing school improvement teams and creating school improvement plans to drive instruction at each school level. Again, it was apparent that goals that are given to specific stakeholders to attain in a specific window of time are needed to build momentum in achieving higher levels of engagement,

differentiation, and higher level thinking. In the team's professional judgment, creating a sense of urgency through a system plan and individual school plans is a direct link to increasing achievement for each child on the journey to college and career readiness.

Another link to the improvement priorities is the lack of distinction of roles and responsibilities. The primary place information should be found would be in dialogue with the teachers. Both teacher/parent and teacher/principal conversations are of high value in closing gaps for each child. That process should then be shared with the system leadership for system accountability and then reported to the board for their accountability. Finally, the continuous improvement data would then be shared with stakeholders through a two-way communication plan that informs stakeholders and enables those stakeholders to have ownership by participating in meaningful roles. The team found no evidence of a clear chain of command that assured autonomy and accountability at each level.

Clay County schools are positioned for the next steps in the continuous improvement process. The internal visit began the system's journey to discovering the current reality. The external review added depth to that inquiry and provided a roadmap to solidifying the foundation. When the roadmap is intentionally linked to the Clay County vision and mission at the board level, the system administration level, the instructional level, and the stakeholder level, goals can be measurable and attainable enabling students to become college and career ready.

**eleot™ Data Summary**

<b>A. Equitable Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	2.35	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	10.00%	45.00%	15.00%	30.00%
2.	3.00	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	25.00%	55.00%	15.00%	5.00%
3.	2.65	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	0.00%	70.00%	25.00%	5.00%
4.	1.55	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	0.00%	20.00%	15.00%	65.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.39</b>						

<b>B. High Expectations</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	2.45	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	5.00%	35.00%	60.00%	0.00%
2.	2.70	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	10.00%	50.00%	40.00%	0.00%
3.	2.30	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	5.00%	50.00%	15.00%	30.00%
4.	2.65	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	10.00%	45.00%	45.00%	0.00%
5.	2.60	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	10.00%	45.00%	40.00%	5.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.54</b>						



<b>C. Supportive Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	2.80	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	15.00%	50.00%	35.00%	0.00%
2.	2.85	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	15.00%	55.00%	30.00%	0.00%
3.	2.60	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	10.00%	50.00%	30.00%	10.00%
4.	2.85	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	10.00%	65.00%	25.00%	0.00%
5.	2.35	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	5.00%	35.00%	50.00%	10.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.69</b>						

<b>D. Active Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	2.50	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	10.00%	30.00%	60.00%	0.00%
2.	2.25	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	5.00%	40.00%	30.00%	25.00%
3.	2.80	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	15.00%	50.00%	35.00%	0.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.52</b>						

<b>E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	2.20	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	5.00%	25.00%	55.00%	15.00%
2.	2.45	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	5.00%	45.00%	40.00%	10.00%
3.	2.40	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	5.00%	35.00%	55.00%	5.00%
4.	2.30	Understands how her/his work is assessed	0.00%	45.00%	40.00%	15.00%
5.	2.35	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	0.00%	40.00%	55.00%	5.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.34</b>						

<b>F. Well-Managed Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.25	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	35.00%	55.00%	10.00%	0.00%
2.	3.25	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	30.00%	65.00%	5.00%	0.00%
3.	3.20	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	20.00%	80.00%	0.00%	0.00%
4.	2.25	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	20.00%	25.00%	15.00%	40.00%
5.	3.40	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	40.00%	60.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.07</b>						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.45	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	15.00%	45.00%	10.00%	30.00%
2.	2.15	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	25.00%	15.00%	10.00%	50.00%
3.	1.75	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	10.00%	20.00%	5.00%	65.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.12</b>						

## Findings

### Powerful Practice

Clay County School System has designed a structure in all schools that connects each student with an adult advocate. Furthermore, they refine this process through time to ensure that all needs are met. (Indicators 3.9)

#### Evidence and Rationale

As the External Review Team examined artifacts, combined with interviews and classroom observations, it became evident that Clay County School personnel have every child’s educational success at the core of what they do. The system has held teachers accountable for ensuring connectivity with students to identify their needs and be the encouraging support that leads to confidence and success. The system has “Because We Care” as a program to be used systemically for student support. The counselor has a schedule that clearly includes individual counseling as well as classroom lessons. The morning program at the schools sends a powerful message to the students that they are cared for and valued by the school system. Additionally, various clubs provide ownership, social interaction, and opportunity for adult advocacy beyond the main focus of each club. The comprehensive structure allows the school employees to gain insight into and serve as an advocate for the students’ needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.

The commitment to know each student and build relationships makes school more meaningful and provides a foundation for students to advance in a caring environment.

# Leadership Capacity

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

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

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

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

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

## Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	2.00	2.67
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	1.80	2.69
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	2.20	2.87
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	2.00	2.64

## Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	2.80	2.96
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	2.00	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.	1.20	3.20
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	2.80	3.00
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	2.60	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	3.00	3.12

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Design and utilize a communication plan that promotes a culture based on all stakeholders' shared values and beliefs for equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students.

(Indicators 1.3)

#### Evidence and Rationale

System and school self- assessments, stakeholder interviews, surveys, and classroom observations indicate the need for a plan to ensure two-way communication among all stakeholders and an equitable educational program for all students that include the lower level learners as well as gifted and talented students. There is a committed process for remediating students identified through various assessments. However, there is currently no screening to identify gifted students and limited, informal practices for offering equitable programs for high achievers.

The system provides professional development for its instructional staff, but systemic transfer of that training

into differentiated instruction in the classrooms was inconsistent or not observable. Student engagement was often based on the system's instructional framework consisting of an opening, work period, and closing. However, the work period consisted of assignments that were done as seatwork in many cases. While some classes had student engagement where students shared ideas or participated in a learning activity, this practice was not systemic.

Positive and supportive two-way communication among all stakeholders informs the system and schools of its performance in providing excellent and equitable programs and learning experiences based on shared values and beliefs about student success.

### **Improvement Priority**

Develop and implement a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide and school-wide purpose for student success.

(Indicators 1.1, 1.2)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

Stakeholder interviews and staff and parent surveys revealed the need for more inclusion from all stakeholder groups in the process of creating a system-wide and school-wide purpose and vision for student success. Stakeholders believe there is a lack of communication and involvement in the current process. The school system sends messages to parents about events but has not been successful in creating avenues for collecting meaningful feedback to support school and system purpose.

The mission of Clay County Board of Education is to act on its vision, offer the best education possible to students by using current technology and curricula materials, by hiring quality teachers, and by celebrating all accomplishments. The vision is "Moving Every Child Forward to Become College and Career Ready." While the External Review Team heard from dedicated stakeholders, there was no evidence of an established process for stakeholder involvement or an established process for driving success in reaching the system's vision and mission. Presently the schools share that vision and mission and there was no evidence of how stakeholders were to participate.

Best practices indicate that involvement and inclusion of all stakeholders in processes that guide the purpose and direction of student learning and success, serves as a connective bridge between the child, home, school, and community.

### **Improvement Priority**

Develop, implement, and commit to a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.

(Indicators 1.4)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

System and school self-assessments, interviews, and artifacts indicate the need for a formal leadership team

that meets regularly to analyze and refine a detailed system and school improvement plan. Specific school improvement plans developed by the leadership team, school staff, and community stakeholders were not included in the evidence. While there is a Clay County School System Strategic Plan, it lacks essential components such as a timeline, strategies, and accountability components. There is no evidence that all stakeholders participated in its development or how the system will implement the plan and hold various stakeholders accountable for meeting the expectations within the system plan.

Detailed system and school improvement plans with clear goals and objectives, timelines, and accountability components are essential in focusing and guiding instruction, staff professional development, and allocation of resources.

### **Improvement Priority**

Promote autonomy by insuring that all levels of leadership are empowered to manage and lead day-to-day operations effectively.

(Indicators 2.3)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

Staff and governing body interviews and surveys indicated the need for school-based administrators to have more autonomy in the day-to-day operations of the schools. The leadership/governing structures and the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, board of education, and school-based administrators need to be more clearly defined and practiced. The board of education and the superintendent need distinct roles, responsibilities, and accountability to the system and stakeholders. The External Review Team did not find evidence of an organizational chart that identified a chain of command or a systematic process for communicating stakeholder concerns. Rather, it appeared that due to the small size of the system, access to the superintendent created an environment that did not allow school administrators to be responsible for day-to-day operations and decisions. This same accessibility led to the superintendent receiving random cases calling for actions that should have begun at the teacher level, and then to the school administrators for resolution. With an articulated and implemented plan for resolution of concerns, all levels of leadership (board, superintendent, and school-based administrators) can work effectively in their distinct roles.

Clearly defined leadership roles empower leaders to be more effective in developing and leading their respective teams. Additionally, clearly defined leadership roles allow leaders to take ownership and assume accountability of their respective schools.



# 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.	2.40	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.	2.80	2.98
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.00	3.05
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	2.20	2.67

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	3.00	2.82
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.40	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.	2.40	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.	2.40	2.64

## Findings

### Opportunity for Improvement

Devise a process and timeline to begin recruiting new teachers earlier in the year in order to be competitive with neighboring communities.

(Indicators 4.1)

#### Evidence and Rationale

Stakeholder interviews with leadership team along with staff surveys indicated a need to retain and recruit highly qualified teachers. During administrative interviews, it was noted that seeking teacher candidates can occur late, which impedes the chance to be competitive with neighboring communities. Attending recruiting fairs and posting openings prior to the school year ending can produce more candidates for the interview process. Given the teacher recruiting and retaining barriers Clay County experiences, it is essential that the system initiates strategic recruiting measures that support its mission to provide quality teachers for its students. System leadership also needs to establish retention strategies that will enhance the stability of the instructional staff.

The recruiting and retention of highly qualified teachers will maximize a system's efforts to provide educational excellence to its students.

# Conclusion

Clay County School System is a very small community of dedicated people. The average student population is 306 and the total personnel of 67 makes the system the largest employer in Clay County. There is one campus that houses Clay County Elementary School, Clay County Middle School, and Clay County 9th Grade Academy. At the present Clay County students in grades 10-12 attend high school in a neighboring county. The board has recently determined that the high school students will be transitioned back to Clay County with one grade added each year to the 9th Grade Academy. This decision must be acknowledged to the Georgia State Office for AdvancED compliance.

As the External Review Team conducted its work, several themes were noted. The system is one of the poorest in Georgia, yet many accomplishments have been made, including expansive work with technology. The schools have established a process for each child to have an adult advocate to support academic and emotional success. Buildings are well-maintained and standards-based instruction is in place.

The greatest need for improvement was the leadership domain, resulting in four Improvement Priorities for Standards 1 and 2. The system and schools lack school improvement teams and school improvement plans that can drive academic success and continuous improvement. There are Title I plans and a Clay County Strategic Plan that lack timelines and accountability components. Furthermore, there is a need for autonomy at the school leadership level. The board and system leadership roles need to be established and practiced to promote autonomy and appropriate responsibilities at every level.

An organizational chart and a formal plan for resolution of concerns that begins with the teacher and systematically moves to the administrator level, then to the superintendent, and finally to the board in the most complex cases needs to be established. The need for a two-way communication plan was identified by the system and verified by the External Review Team. As the team examined artifacts, it also became evident that the system has barriers to overcome in the recruiting and retention of quality teachers; thus, it was suggested that a written plan be implemented that includes early steps in recruiting.

With the establishment of the four Improvement Priorities and the one Opportunity for Improvement, the board, system leadership, school leadership, teachers, students, and community can experience a new journey of collaboration that enables the system to actualize its vision and mission to serve all students and have them college and career ready upon graduation.

## 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:

- Design and utilize a communication plan that promotes a culture based on all stakeholders' shared values and beliefs for equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students.

- Develop and implement a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide and school-wide purpose for student success.
- Develop, implement, and commit to a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.
- Promote autonomy by insuring that all levels of leadership are empowered to manage and lead day-to-day operations effectively.

# 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	266.67	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	280.00	274.14
Leadership Capacity	245.00	296.08
Resource Utilization	257.50	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
Clay County Elementary School	290.48	309.09	300.00	297.44
Clay County Middle School	295.24	318.18	300.00	302.56

# Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Mary Anne Hipp	<p>As a retired school administrator, Mary Anne Hipp currently serves as a Lead Evaluator for AdvancED and provides educational consulting services to school personnel and boards. She holds Bachelor and Master degrees in Music Education, certifications in Elementary Education and Early Childhood, and a Master +30 in Educational Leadership. She has 47 years of experience across the United States, serving as teacher, Catholic school administrator, Director of Bayou Charter School for Dyslexic Students, and Consultant for the Recovery School District of Louisiana. For the past five years she has been Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Ashton School in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She enjoys educational writing and has been a contributing author on several American and International educational blogs.</p> <p>Certifications:</p> <p>ELEOT Certification (Active)</p>
Dr. Justin Finney	<p>Currently Dr. Finney serves as principal of Mulberry Creek Elementary in Cataula, Georgia. He also serves on the graduate faculty at Columbus State University, in Columbus, Georgia, as an adjunct professor. Previous service assignments include assistant principal at Harris County Carver Middle School in Hamilton, Georgia, Social Science Education Program Coordinator, at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia, and middle school teacher at Rothschild Middle School in Columbus, Georgia. Prior to Dr. Finney's education career he served in US Army Special Operations for eleven years.</p>
Mrs. Kathy Reifschneider	<p>Kathy Reifschneider retired from a career in public education after 34 years on June 30, 2013. At the time of her retirement she held the position of Director of Instruction. Under the umbrella of this position she facilitated district-wide curriculum and instruction development, district wide assessment and evaluation, coordinated the district Title 1 Program, and also facilitated district technology development and use. During her eighteen years at Festus she also facilitated the NCA CASI and later the AdvanEd accreditation processes. She has served as a Lead Evaluator for AdvancEd, facilitating School and System Accreditations, since 2010.</p>

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Rhonda Gulley	<p>Rhonda Gulley is in her second year as Principal at Upson- Lee Middle School in Thomaston, Georgia. She began her career as a paraprofessional at Upson- Lee Middle School in 1993 while she was finishing her degree in Middle Childhood Education at Mercer University. She spent eleven years in the classroom where she has taught mostly English-Language Arts and Social Studies in fourth, fifth and sixth grades. Rhonda obtained her Masters degree in Instructional Technology from Troy University and her Educational Specialist in Educational Leadership from Columbus State University. During her time in the classroom, she served as a teacher for gifted and talented cluster groups as well as a collaborative teacher for special education, primarily serving students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders. Rhonda left the classroom and spent five years as an Instructional Coach focusing on technology integration as her system converted their classrooms into 21st Century Classrooms. In this role, she spent time modeling and teaching teachers how to effectively integrate technology in their classrooms. Prior to being named as principal of Upson- Lee Middle School in May of 2013, Rhonda spent two years at ULMS as Assistant Principal. During her career, Rhonda has presented a number of times at the GaETC conference, the GACIS conference and the GMSA conference on subjects including Thinking Maps, School Improvement, and various aspects of technology. She has taught Professional Development classes within her district on all aspects of technology integration. She has recently received the 2014 GAEL President’s School Achievement Award, the Mike Campbell Exemplary Leadership Award and the Effective Middle School Program Award. While principal, Upson- Lee Middle School became a three time re-designated Georgia Lighthouse School through the National Forum of Accelerated Middle Grade Reform.</p>
Mrs. Amy Laws	<p>Amy Laws entered the field of teaching as an ESE teacher and worked at the secondary level for 10 years . Her leadership began as an Athletic Director for 2 years at a high school. During this time she completed her degree in Education Leadership at Lynn University and began an administrative career. She spent five years as an Assistant Principal over School Operations/Testing at a nationally rated high school. For the past two years Mrs. Laws has been an Assistant Principal of Curriculum at a middle school. Mrs. Laws welcomes opportunities to grow professionally. She is currently in charge of the district Attendance Committee and a team of administrators working on inter rater reliability for the teacher evaluation process. She is returning for the second time to serve on an External Review team in the state for Georgia in the past year.</p>
Dr. David Mims	<p>Currently serving as the Superintendent of Schools in Crisp County, Georgia. Twenty-seven years as an educator serving in the capacities of Superintendent, Asst. Superintendent, Middle and High School Principal, Athletic Director, teacher, and coach.</p>



## Next Steps

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

## About AdvancED

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

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

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

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