

Report of the External Review Team for Bremen City School System

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Use of Diagnostic Tools

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

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

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

Index of Education Quality

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

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

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

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

Benchmark Data

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

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

Powerful Practices

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

Opportunities for Improvement

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

Improvement Priorities

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

The Review

The Bremen City School System hosted a system accreditation External Review Team (Team) of five members from October 30 to November 2, 2016. Prior to the visit, the External Review Team participated in an orientation conference call and exchanged numerous emails to confirm travel and meeting plans. The team members also studied system and school accreditation reports and reviewed evidence made available electronically before the dates for the visit. The Lead Evaluator communicated with the superintendent and the assistant superintendent, who served as the system AdvancED contact person, through telephone calls and emails numerous times to coordinate details related to the visit schedule, school visits and team logistics.

The Team arrived on Sunday afternoon before the Monday of Halloween and participated in an orientation meeting followed by a full schedule for day and evening activities until the Exit Report Wednesday afternoon. The Team interviewed stakeholders, reviewed artifacts and observed four schools on three campuses in operation. Following these information gathering activities, team members engaged in deliberations to reach conclusions about the function of Bremen City School System in light of AdvancED Standards. By Wednesday morning, the Team was comfortable identifying recommendations for system improvement and commending the system for exemplary governance, leadership and communication functions.

The Team greatly appreciated the warm hospitality, delicious meals catered by a community member and attention during the visit. In addition to providing transportation when needed, system personnel were available for interviews whenever scheduled. System administrators were gracious in their interactions with the Team and readily provided information and assistance. Board members made special efforts to be available for interviews despite work and personal responsibilities.

System personnel are to be commended for their preparations for the visit and for their candidness when responding to questions. All board members were available for interviews, and a total of 208 stakeholders participated in interview sessions with members of the Team.

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 | 7 |
| Instructional Staff | 48 |
| Support Staff | 3 |
| Students | 124 |
| Parents/Community/Business Leaders | 20 |
| Total | 208 |

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. | 3.40 | 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 | 2.49 |
| 3.3 | Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations. | 2.00 | 2.59 |
| 3.4 | System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success. | 2.00 | 2.71 |
| 3.5 | The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels. | 2.20 | 2.58 |
| 3.6 | Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning. | 2.60 | 2.48 |
| 3.7 | Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning. | 2.20 | 2.60 |

| 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. | 3.80 | 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. | 3.80 | 2.50 |
| 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. | 3.20 | 2.47 |
| 3.11 | All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning. | 2.80 | 2.65 |
| 3.12 | The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students. | 3.00 | 2.64 |

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 | 2.66 |
| 5.2 | Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning. | 2.00 | 2.49 |
| 5.3 | Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data. | 2.00 | 2.15 |
| 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 | 2.50 |
| 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 | 2.75 |

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

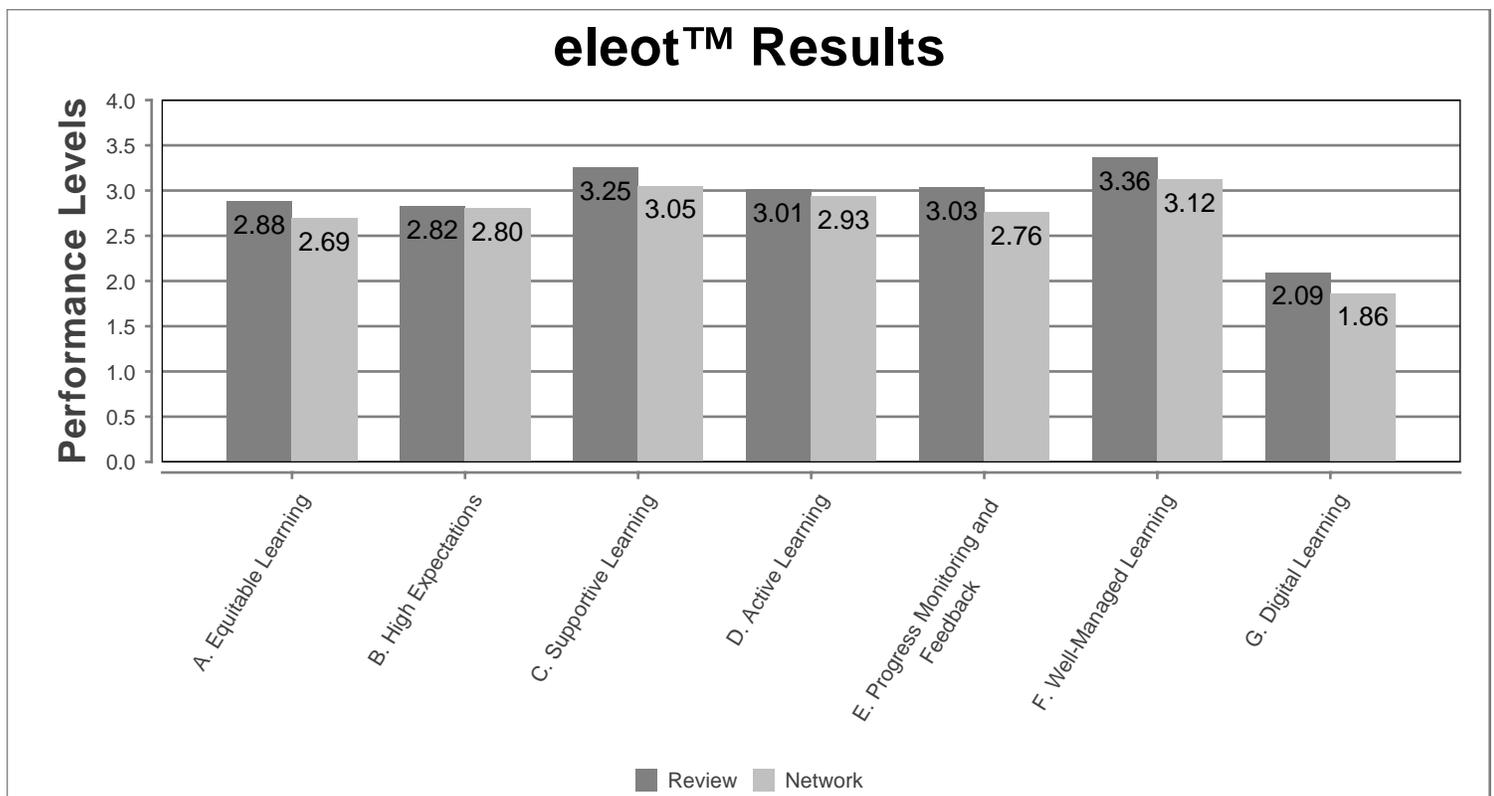
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

| Evaluative Criteria | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Assessment Quality | 3.20 | 3.33 |
| Test Administration | 3.20 | 3.52 |
| Equity of Learning | 3.00 | 2.54 |
| Quality of Learning | 3.00 | 2.96 |

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 External Review Team conducted classroom observations in four schools on Tuesday of the visit. A total of 54 classroom observations were conducted at the elementary and secondary levels. The system scored a rating higher than the AdvancED Network Average ratings in all seven of the learning environments of Equitable Learning, High Expectations, Supportive Learning, Active Learning, Progress Monitoring and Feedback, Well-Managed Learning and Digital Learning Environments. The environment that scored the

highest rating was Well-Managed Learning Environment with a system average rating of 3.36 on a scale which ranged from a low of 1.00 to a high of 4.00. The environment that scored the second highest rating was Supportive Learning Environment with a rating of 3.25. The Team observed students interacting respectfully with teachers and their peers. The environment that scored the third highest rating was Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment. When interviewed, students thoughtfully described the system's reporting and grading process. Parents also stated that clear and timely communication from the system kept them up-to-date on their childrens' progress. The system scored the lowest rating in the learning environment of Digital Learning. The rating for the Digital Learning Environment was 2.09, although this rating exceeded the AdvancED Network Average rating of 1.86. While teachers were observed using SmartBoards to aid instruction, use of emerging technologies by students and access to equipment were limited. These ratings reflected priorities indicating that the Digital Learning environment with the lowest rating is an area that requires attention to bring about improvement.

The Well-Managed Learning Environment scored 3.36 compared to the AEN score of 3.12. During classroom visits, the Team observed numerous instances of students following classroom rules and responding respectfully to their teachers. Students knew classroom routines and behavioral expectations in elementary, middle and high school classrooms. The Team observed students making smooth transitions from one activity to another. Routines and classroom habits were clearly established. Students were polite and friendly toward system personnel and team members. Local school personnel commented that disciplinary referrals were a "rare occurrence."

The Supportive Learning Environment score of 3.25 placed this rating above the AEN average score of 3.05. Observations at all levels indicated that students were provided support and assistance to understand instructional objectives and lesson content. Team members observed positive attitudes as students participated in activities of direct instruction. Teachers consistently created a supportive learning environment for students, and students expressed pride in the schools and school system.

The Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment score of 3.03 also placed the system rating above the AEN average score of 2.76. Students answered questions regarding how their work was assessed, and students stated that teachers provided feedback about their progress. During interviews, parents described numerous communication avenues employed by the system to inform parents about their childrens' current progress. The Team observed teachers walking around and providing immediate feedback to monitor students and allow time for student to revise their work.

The Active Learning Environment score of 3.01 placed the system above the AEN average score of 2.93. At the elementary and intermediate grade levels, team members observed students actively engaged in learning activities during group work, in independent settings and in teacher directed lessons. Students had numerous opportunities to interact with and engage in discussions with teachers as well as other students. However, at the middle and high school levels, the Team observed numerous instances in which students participated in lecture format classes and seatwork with limited opportunities to make connections from content to real-life.

Equitable Learning Environment was scored 2.88 compared to the AEN average score of 2.69. Students had

equal access to participate in classroom activities and discussions. The Team saw instances in which rules were fairly and consistently applied. Although the system score was higher than the AEN, the score for the first indicator related to differentiated learning was 2.54. During school visits, the Team found limited evidence of learning opportunities that differentiated activities for students at all grade levels.

The High Expectations Environment rating of 2.82 placed the system above the AEN average score of 2.80. Team members observed students responding to questions that required application and evaluation in some instances. However, while the Team observed instances of student engagement in rigorous coursework, a systemic focus on rigor was a challenge for the system, particularly in light of the current emphasis on the growth model of student achievement. Also, few instances of teachers providing exemplars of high quality work were observed by the Team.

The Digital Learning Environment score of 2.09 was the lowest score of the seven learning environments, but it was above the AEN average of 1.86. The system had limited equipment for students to use when engaged in classroom activities. The Team observed teachers using technology to enhance delivery of instructional objectives. However, the Team noted few instances of students using computers to research topics, gather information, communicate or work collaboratively for learning.

During observations, the Team noted that students followed classroom routines, transitioned smoothly and interacted respectfully with teachers and their peers. Team members saw evidence that students were provided support to understand lesson content and worked to meet expectations established by teachers. Moreover, team members learned that the system used numerous avenues of communication to keep students and parents up-to-date with student progress. The Learning Environments that were priority areas for further consideration by system leadership were those of High Expectations and Digital Learning with a focus on actively engaging students in classroom activities across all grade levels and schools.

eleot™ Data Summary

| A. Equitable Learning | | | % | | | |
|--|----------------|---|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 2.54 | Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs | 29.63% | 14.81% | 35.19% | 20.37% |
| 2. | 3.48 | Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support | 55.56% | 37.04% | 7.41% | 0.00% |
| 3. | 3.61 | Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied | 62.96% | 35.19% | 1.85% | 0.00% |
| 4. | 1.91 | Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences | 11.11% | 20.37% | 16.67% | 51.85% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.88 | | | | | | |

| B. High Expectations | | | % | | | |
|--|----------------|--|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 3.26 | Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher | 46.30% | 35.19% | 16.67% | 1.85% |
| 2. | 3.17 | Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable | 44.44% | 29.63% | 24.07% | 1.85% |
| 3. | 2.07 | Is provided exemplars of high quality work | 12.96% | 20.37% | 27.78% | 38.89% |
| 4. | 2.93 | Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks | 31.48% | 33.33% | 31.48% | 3.70% |
| 5. | 2.69 | Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing) | 22.22% | 29.63% | 42.59% | 5.56% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.82 | | | | | | |

| C. Supportive Learning | | | % | | | |
|--|----------------|---|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 3.57 | Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive | 66.67% | 24.07% | 9.26% | 0.00% |
| 2. | 3.59 | Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning | 66.67% | 25.93% | 7.41% | 0.00% |
| 3. | 3.46 | Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback) | 61.11% | 24.07% | 14.81% | 0.00% |
| 4. | 3.13 | Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks | 50.00% | 24.07% | 14.81% | 11.11% |
| 5. | 2.48 | Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs | 24.07% | 27.78% | 20.37% | 27.78% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.25 | | | | | | |

| D. Active Learning | | | % | | | |
|--|----------------|--|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 3.09 | Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students | 42.59% | 35.19% | 11.11% | 11.11% |
| 2. | 2.70 | Makes connections from content to real-life experiences | 20.37% | 35.19% | 38.89% | 5.56% |
| 3. | 3.22 | Is actively engaged in the learning activities | 46.30% | 33.33% | 16.67% | 3.70% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.01 | | | | | | |

| E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback | | | % | | | |
|--|----------------|--|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 3.20 | Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning | 48.15% | 27.78% | 20.37% | 3.70% |
| 2. | 3.07 | Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding | 38.89% | 40.74% | 9.26% | 11.11% |
| 3. | 3.20 | Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content | 42.59% | 38.89% | 14.81% | 3.70% |
| 4. | 2.91 | Understands how her/his work is assessed | 33.33% | 33.33% | 24.07% | 9.26% |
| 5. | 2.76 | Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback | 27.78% | 40.74% | 11.11% | 20.37% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.03 | | | | | | |

| F. Well-Managed Learning | | | % | | | |
|--|----------------|---|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 3.70 | Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers | 77.78% | 16.67% | 3.70% | 1.85% |
| 2. | 3.69 | Follows classroom rules and works well with others | 77.78% | 14.81% | 5.56% | 1.85% |
| 3. | 3.20 | Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities | 64.81% | 11.11% | 3.70% | 20.37% |
| 4. | 2.57 | Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities | 44.44% | 7.41% | 9.26% | 38.89% |
| 5. | 3.61 | Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences | 72.22% | 18.52% | 7.41% | 1.85% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.36 | | | | | | |

| G. Digital Learning | | | % | | | |
|--|---------|--|--------------|---------|------------------|--------------|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 2.35 | Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning | 29.63% | 16.67% | 12.96% | 40.74% |
| 2. | 1.94 | Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning | 22.22% | 9.26% | 9.26% | 59.26% |
| 3. | 1.98 | Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning | 20.37% | 14.81% | 7.41% | 57.41% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.09 | | | | | | |

Findings

Opportunity For Improvement

Develop and implement formal processes for data analysis and utilization to inform and support instructional practices and student learning at all levels.

(Indicator 5.2, Indicator 5.3, SF2. Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis, SP2. Test Administration, SP4. Equity of Learning)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 5.2

Evidence and Rationale

System and school level staff described the need to provide additional training in analysis and use of data for all staff in the system's Accreditation Report. During interviews, system and school level staff described a critical need to provide personnel to serve as instructional facilitators. The system has plans to appoint another assistant principal at the high school with an instructional focus. The Team observed limited use of data charts and materials in schools.

Student achievement is positively impacted by instructional support staff and informed analysis and use of data to guide instructional planning.

Opportunity For Improvement

Develop and implement instructional strategies that actively engage students in collaborative activities focused on application of knowledge and skills.

(Indicator 3.3)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.3

Evidence and Rationale

Classroom observations, a review of evidence and interviews with stakeholders revealed the need to implement instructional strategies that actively engage students at all grade levels. The Team saw evidence that students, particularly at the lower grade levels, were actively engaged in activities that accommodated individual learning needs. However, students in upper grades often participated in whole group activities in a lecture format.

Varying instructional delivery methods that require students to collaborate and to actively participate in learning supports academic growth and achievement.

Powerful Practice

The system has shown an understanding of and a major commitment to consistently maintaining communication with students and their families through the use of social media, face-to-face interaction, weekly newsletters, emails and a text messaging system.

(Indicator 3.8)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.8

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews conducted by the Team determined that the system was highly committed to maintaining extensive communication with students and their families. The superintendent utilized a parent email directory on a weekly basis to inform parents of important upcoming activities and events. Additionally, the Technology Department had interlinked all social media outlets, including the system website, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook so that images and announcements were shared simultaneously. Furthermore, teachers kept parents informed of their students' progress through the use of a texting system called REMIND, weekly newsletters, e-mail and face-to-face interactions.

Student progress and positive relationships with parents occur when a system practices frequent and clear communication with stakeholders.

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. | 3.40 | 2.68 |
| 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. | 3.20 | 2.68 |
| 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. | 3.40 | 2.90 |
| 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. | 3.20 | 2.65 |

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|-----------|--|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 2.1 | The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools. | 3.40 | 2.97 |
| 2.2 | The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively. | 3.60 | 2.96 |
| 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. | 3.40 | 3.17 |
| 2.4 | Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction. | 3.60 | 3.03 |
| 2.5 | Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction. | 3.40 | 2.74 |

| 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. | 3.20 | 2.70 |

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

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

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

| Evaluative Criteria | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Questionnaire Administration | 3.80 | 3.42 |
| Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis | 3.80 | 3.03 |

Findings

Powerful Practice

The Bremen City School System has involved stakeholders in a systematic and formalized process for review, revision and communication of the system's purpose.

(Indicator 1.1)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 1.1

Evidence and Rationale

During interviews and a review of documents, the Team learned that the system followed a systematic process to review and revise the system's purpose statement and motto. Stakeholders representing all groups served by the system readily described the purpose of the system as well as the process for developing the system's purpose and direction. The Board held a retreat in which system leaders participate yearly. During this event, members of the board and system leadership discussed the current status of the system and reviewed the system purpose and direction. Community stakeholders were invited to offer input at the beginning of each school year. Revisions to the system's purpose and direction were then made as appropriate.

A formalized process to review and revise a system's purpose, that includes stakeholder participation, supports student success.

Powerful Practice

The leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.

(Indicator 2.2, Indicator 2.4)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.4

Evidence and Rationale

Leadership and staff at all levels of the system fostered a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction, "excellence in all we do", as evidenced by strategic planning documents, school improvement documents and academic offerings. Leaders and staff were collectively responsible for maintaining and improving conditions that support learning. Shared leadership was evident based on the interviews of administrators, teachers and support staff. The culture was characterized by collaboration and the sense of community. This statement was echoed clearly during interviews with parents and students. Conditions that impact increased student achievement are supported by a culture of collaboration focused on achieving a system's purpose and direction.

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. | 3.40 | 2.87 |
| 4.2 | Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations. | 3.20 | 2.87 |
| 4.3 | The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff. | 3.20 | 3.06 |
| 4.4 | The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system. | 3.40 | 2.76 |

| 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. | 3.20 | 2.73 |
| 4.6 | The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs. | 2.20 | 2.72 |
| 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. | 3.20 | 2.58 |
| 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. | 3.20 | 2.60 |

Findings

Improvement Priority

Design and implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, equipment and infrastructure.

(Indicator 4.6)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.6

Evidence and Rationale

During interviews, the Team learned that Bremen City School System is facing the challenge of providing equipment and procedures for full implementation of online student testing. School observations and interviews with local school personnel also described the need to continuously improve technology services and access to equipment.

Increasing the ratio of student-to-device and providing teachers and students modern technical instructional tools promote engagement and performance learning.

Powerful Practice

The system has committed to effectively utilizing resources to find and sustain qualified staff to support the system's purpose and instructional program.

(Indicator 4.1)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.1

Evidence and Rationale

During interviews and through review of documents, the Team saw evidence of effective use of resources to provide highly qualified staff in all positions. All teaching staff members were highly qualified. The allocation of funds to provide additional positions to support student achievement also demonstrated the system's commitment to student success.

Providing sufficient qualified professional and support staff positively impacts student achievement.

Conclusion

The External Review Team noted four themes supportive of student success and organizational effectiveness for Bremen City School System. Team members saw and heard evidence of a high level of trust between the community, the Board of Education members and the school system staff. A parent commented, "I know my child is in good hands when I drop her at school. I know she is safe, and I know she will learn." In the Accreditation Report, the system staff listed the presence of "a high level of relation trust" as a feature of the school system.

Secondly, the system has maintained a focus on the motto "Excellence In All We Do." Recent graduation rates in 2016 of 96.3% and in 2015 of 97.1% were results of this focus on excellence and success for students. Additional indicators of student success included test score results of fourth and eighth grade students in science and social studies that placed first in the state on 2015-2016 Georgia Milestones results. Bremen Academy was awarded "Silver" by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement for "Highest Performing" in 2015. Moreover, Bremen City School System achieved the highest CCRPI score in the state in 2013 at 90.5.

A third prominent theme noted by the Team was that of system leadership. The governing board served without compensation or reimbursement for personal expenses incurred because of their service to the system. The Team heard evidence that the Board worked as a cohesive unit to ensure student learning and continuous academic improvement. The Board held an annual planning retreat each year. The Team learned that this retreat was a time for system administrators to present accomplishments and identify future challenges of schools and the system. During interviews, system administrators described the annual retreat as a time when professional collegiality and trust were strengthened through open discussion, collaboration and shared leadership.

The Team was also impressed with the numerous avenues of communication employed by system personnel to convey current news and system activities to stakeholders. The superintendent prepared weekly messages using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to broadcast system updates to parents and system stakeholders. Evidence clearly supported the finding that the system has strong relationships with families and maintains open lines of communication to ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed of student academic achievements, extracurricular activities and other important information. When asked what the system was most proud of, the superintendent said, "That we celebrate our kids. I feel like an area we do really well in is highlighting our students. We have almost 1200 parent emails registered." During interviews, parents stated that clear and timely communication was a marked strength of the system. The system has established an effective communication system between and among all stakeholders using various current emerging technologies.

Through interviews and a review of evidence, the External Review Team acknowledged three challenges of the system. Most importantly, a challenge of the system was that of keeping abreast of emerging technologies. The system has been working toward full implementation of the requirement that 100% of standardized student testing occur online. However, funding challenges and the speed of technological advances has proved to be challenging. The system needed to update their plan for securing equipment and

establishing procedures for full implementation of standardized student testing.

Secondly, the system was faced with the challenge of developing and implementing formal processes for data analysis and utilization to inform and support instructional practices. In the system Accreditation Report, the system acknowledged the need to provide regular and systematic training in the evaluation, interpretation and use of data for all staff members. The system was in the beginning stages of developing routines and procedures for applying learning from all data sources that are used consistently by staff throughout the district. Data teams have been established and vertical planning structures were in place. A monthly data meeting schedule supported Response to Intervention (RTI). Vertical team meetings took place quarterly. However, interviews with secondary staff indicated that time for collaboration to discuss student achievement data and plan for instruction was limited because of scheduling challenges. System leaders acknowledged the need to provide training in data analysis and were considering options for additional professional learning for all staff members.

Finally, the Team observed a limited variety of instructional delivery techniques that fully engaged students in classroom activities. While students at some grade levels and in some classes were involved in hands-on activities and high engagement tasks, low levels of student engagement were observed in other grades and classrooms. The system has appointed a committee to assist the high school principal with the task of recommending and appointing an additional high school assistant principal who will serve as an instructional facilitator.

Bremen City School System has successfully implemented a system-wide continuous improvement process that involved stakeholders from all groups served by the system. Moreover, the system has established a high level of trust between and among the system and all stakeholder groups. Effective leadership at the system and school levels supported a positive culture to recruit and retain highly qualified personnel. Clear communication, trust and effective leadership served as a strong basis for future actions and continuous improvement.

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 implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, equipment and infrastructure.

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 | 306.83 | 278.94 |
| Teaching and Learning Impact | 282.86 | 268.48 |
| Leadership Capacity | 345.00 | 293.71 |
| Resource Utilization | 312.50 | 286.27 |

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 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Bremen Fourth and Fifth Grade Academy | 295.24 | 318.18 | 300.00 | 302.56 |
| Bremen High School | 276.19 | 309.09 | 285.71 | 287.18 |
| Bremen Middle School | 285.71 | 309.09 | 300.00 | 294.87 |
| H. A. Jones Elementary School | 285.71 | 318.18 | 300.00 | 297.44 |

Team Roster

| Member | Brief Biography |
|-------------------|--|
| Dr. Agnes E Smith | <p>Dr. Agnes E. Smith recently retired as an associate professor in the Department of Leadership and Teacher Education at the University of South Alabama. She taught graduate courses in instructional leadership, mentoring, and curriculum development. Prior to her work at USA, Dr. Smith was principal of a Grades K-8 school in Baldwin County, Alabama. She is the author of numerous articles related to instructional leadership, and she is co-author of a case studies book. Dr. Smith's research centered on factors that sustain effective local school leadership. She serves as a Lead Evaluator with AdvancED working most recently with teams in Georgia, Arkansas, South Carolina, Nevada and Wyoming.</p> |
| Dr. Susan E Myers | <p>Dr. Sue Myers is an educational leader with over 26 years of experience ranging from the classroom to the district office. She currently serves as the Executive Director of School Improvement and Assessment for the Paulding County School District. Her previous positions include elementary teacher, School Improvement Specialist, adjunct professor, Assistant Principal, Principal, and Director of Title I. Dr. Myers earned a Ph.D. and Ed.S. in Educational Administration from Georgia State University, an M.Ed. in Middle Grades from University of Georgia, and a B.S. in Elementary Education from St. Cloud State University, MN. Her experience has provided her the opportunity to be involved in many state, district, and school level initiatives and programs, as well as present at national and state level conferences. She has served on AdvancED visiting teams in the past and currently leads the accreditation process in her school district.</p> |
| Dr. Vicki L DeMao | <p>Dr. Vicki DeMao is a Lead Evaluator for AdvancED and has worked in more than twelve different states in the Midwest and in the South, leading teams of educators in more than 30 different school districts and Educational Service Agencies. Her current responsibilities include consultant and administrator for Centerville-Abington Community Schools and Field Consultant for Indiana NCA/AdvancED schools identified for school improvement under Title I guidelines. Her past educational experiences include: Assistant Professor at University of the Pacific in Stockton, California; Director of Elementary and Secondary Education for Richmond Community School in Indiana; and, Field Coach for Gifted Education in the state of Indiana. Vicki started her career as a teacher and has been a principal of two different K-6 elementary schools, supervisor for Pre-K to grade 12, curriculum director, grant writer, and federal programs coordinator. Vicki has been a presenter at state and national conferences and works with schools and school districts in Indiana to implement the state laws governing gifted education identification, service options, and program evaluation. As a community volunteer, Vicki has been a First Tee Charter Board Member, Chamber of Commerce subcommittee member, original grant writer for Birth to Five, Inc., university advisor for Indiana University East, trained reviewer of federal grants, adjunct professor at Earlham College, and grant writer for public and private organizations.</p> |

| Member | Brief Biography |
|---------------------------|---|
| <p>Dr. Rhonda Baldwin</p> | <p>Rhonda Baldwin has served the Douglas County School System in Douglasville Georgia for twenty-seven years and is a product of the same school system. As three family generations before her and with a strong desire to serve her community providing educational opportunities to children, she began her career at Fairplay Middle School in Douglas County as an Eighth Grade Science Teacher and served her students in this capacity for fourteen years. While teaching her students at Fairplay Middle, Rhonda began to broaden her educational career and accepted a position as Administrative Assistant in 2000, serving primarily as the sixth grade administrator for two years in addition to teaching three eighth grade science classes. In 2003, she accepted a position as Assistant Principal at Holly Springs Elementary School in Douglas County and began exploring the elementary world in education. While this experience was rewarding and challenging, she was afforded the opportunity to serve the Douglas County School System as Professional Learning Director during the summer of 2003 and has been serving her educators and students in this capacity since accepting the position.</p> <p>As a life-long learner, Rhonda recognized the importance of increasing her skills and knowledge base to support her student and teacher needs. Her personal educational path began with a Bachelor degree from Mercer University, Georgia, in 1990 and continued at the University Of West Georgia where she completed her Educational Doctorate in 2010; both her Master's and Specialist Programs yielded a double focus on Math and Science Middle School Instruction at the University Of West Georgia. In strengthening her educator certification in Georgia, Rhonda had also completed program work to support her skillset as a Teacher Support Specialist and K-12 Reading program provider. In 2004 Rhonda began the National Staff Development Academy program to strengthen her service as the Professional Learning Director and graduated this program in 2006. Continuing her pursuit of learning, Rhonda now learns from her students. She supports Teacher Leader growth through both endorsement and master degree programs in her district and at the University of the Cumberland in Kentucky.</p> |
| <p>Dr. Susan Cole</p> | <p>Dr. Cole received an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood and an Ed.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Alabama. She also received graduate degrees from Georgia State University and The University of West Georgia.</p> <p>With over 30 years of experience, Dr. Cole has worked in several school districts as a teacher and a principal. As a principal, she opened new elementary schools and assisted in developing the school communities. Additionally, she served as Director of Community Schools and Director of Human Resources in Georgia. She was named Administrator of the Year in Cobb County, Georgia.</p> <p>Professionally, Dr. Cole served as a Georgia Governor's Leadership Institute instructor and participant. She was also active in the Georgia Association of School Personnel Administrators serving on the Board of Directors as the Chairman of the Business Committee and State Program Chair. In 2015, she presented at the National Blue Ribbon Conference. She also has served as an adjunct professor at Kennesaw State University, Stetson University, and Piedmont College.</p> <p>Dr. Cole has been active in the Chamber of Commerce Leadership programs for adults and students. She served on the Board of Directors of Cobb County, Georgia, Youth Leadership program and was awarded the W. Wyman Pilcher Jr. Memorial Scholarship award for community service by the Cobb County of Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Cole has also served on numerous boards including Northeast Georgia American Red Cross; Celebration Arts Council; Florida Hospital, Diabetes Center; and Boys and Girls Club.</p> |

| Member | Brief Biography |
|-------------------|--|
| Dr. Terese Martin | <p>Dr. Martin is originally from Wrightsville, Georgia and graduated from Johnson County High School in 1995. She later obtained a bachelor's degree in business management from Georgia College & State University in 1998. Realizing that teaching was her true calling, she decided to transition into education and became a middle grades math teacher in 2001. With a background in business management, it was natural for her to gravitate towards leadership roles and responsibilities. She received her doctorate degree in educational administration from Georgia Southern University in 2009 and has served in multiple leadership roles in the Bibb County School District located in Macon, Georgia throughout her tenure as an educator, which includes instructional lead teacher, assistant principal, and principal. Currently, she serves as the Director of SOAR Academy, which is an alternative program for students in grades 6-12.</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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