External Review

The School District of Palm Beach County

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Introduction to the External Review Process

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 specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution 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 examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards, but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Part I: Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It also includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, observations of the Learning Environment, as well as Required Actions.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

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's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective 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 ensure excellence and continuous improvement. The standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains an evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, conclusions concerning Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards, and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review Team. Indicators are evaluated and rated individually by the External Review Team using a four-level performance rubric. The Standard Performance Level is the average of indicator scores for the standard.

Standard 1: Purpose and Direction
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 own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the institutions' vision that is supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Standard	Standard Performance Level

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.			3.0
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	•District purpose statements - past and present •Survey results •Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders •Written District Quality Assurance Review procedures and documents that monitor its schools' adherence to the district purpose and direction •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Minutes from meetings related to development of the district's purpose and direction •Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness •Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the district's purpose	3
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.	•Survey results •Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements •Written District Quality Assurance Review procedures and documents that monitor schools' adherence to the district purpose and direction and that of the school •Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement •Examples of written stakeholder communications or marketing materials that portray the school purpose and direction	3

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.	•Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders about educational programs and equitable learning experiences •District Quality Assurance Review plans that document two-way communication on district and school effectiveness and learning, thinking, and life skills •Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans •Survey results •Statements or documents about ethical and professional practices •Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs •Statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning •The district strategic plan	3
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.	•Examples of schools continuous improvement plans •District Quality Assurance Review plans that document two-way communication on district and school effectiveness and learning, thinking, and life skills •Survey results •Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs •Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings •Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders •The district data profile •The district strategic plan	3

Powerful Practices   *Indicator*

1. Palm Beach County School District's commitment to the "Student First" philosophy is evident throughout the district.

   Data collected from a variety of sources provide abundant evidence of a commitment to the "Student First" philosophy within the district. The Single School Culture has resulted in such practices as consistent safety protocols and Positive Behavior Support program in all schools throughout the district. Interviews with numerous stakeholders, including board members, principals, and parents, verified district leadership's claims that commitment to student success is paramount in decision-making. The district's professional training system available for all staff ensures that staff members throughout the district have the tools for implementation of student-focused initiatives. In addition, the district focuses its analysis of results to identify the highest-need schools and programs and to target resources through the Tiered Support model.

   The district has a solid foundation for implementation of the Student First philosophy as defined in its new strategic plan, which includes even more ambitious objectives like ensuring that all students are supported "not as a collective unit, but with individualized education plans."

   1.3

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

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 school leadership research, Leithwood & 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 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 school communities to attain school 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 school 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 has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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	Standard Performance Level

The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.			3.17
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	•Professional development plans •Student handbooks •Staff handbooks •District operations manuals •Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions •School handbooks •Established Board Committees (Audit, Finance, Budget Advisory, Academic Advisory, etc.)	3
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	•Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest •Proof of legal counsel •Governing authority training plan •Assurances, certifications •Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies •Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest •Governing code of ethics •Applicable governing authority policies demonstrating responsibility of the Board.	3
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.	•District strategic plan •Examples of school improvement plans •Roles and responsibilities of school leadership •Roles and responsibilities of district leadership •Stakeholder input and feedback •Academic Business Plan, Advisory Committee Involvement	3

2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	•Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan •Professional development offerings and plans •Examples of collaboration and shared leadership •Examples of decisions aligned with the school's purpose statement •Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans •Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs •Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction	4
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	•Minutes from meetings with stakeholders •Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action •Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys •Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan •Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan	3
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	•District's Master In-Service Plan, Leadership/Teacher Development, Professional Development Support, Evaluation Guides/Professional Standards, Established Inspector General	3

Powerful Practices   *Indicator*

1. The Single School Culture is systemic throughout the district.   2.4
   A review of artifacts, classroom observations, presentations, and interviews with district stakeholders provided clear evidence that common frameworks for the three pillars of the single school culture -- academics, behavior and climate/culture -- are pervasive throughout the district. Quality instruction has been enhanced by the Educational Data Warehouse (EDW), Learning Village curriculum bank, Learning Team Meetings (LTM), and professional development systems such as Train U. Consistent development and use of positive behavior protocols in all schools have enhanced both instruction and school climate. School cultures conducive to increasing student achievement are clearly evident in the 34 schools visited during the External Review and in numerous stakeholder interviews.

   The district's commitment to the Single School Culture has been a constant over a number of years, despite significant changes in leadership, funding, and demographics. As a result, the district is poised to actualize its vision of becoming a "dynamic, collaborative, multicultural community."

Opportunities for Improvement   *Indicator*

1. Establish procedures to ensure that stakeholder survey results are shared with all stakeholders.   2.5
   Review of artifacts and interviews with district and school leaders indicated that the School Effectiveness Questionnaire has been given to stakeholders for a number of years. Nonetheless, reports of the survey data have not been widely disseminated to stakeholders, including district stakeholders, in the last two years.

   The district should make available the SEQ surveys results to all stakeholders in a timely fashion. This will ensure that opinions of stakeholders are reviewed and possibly embedded in future improvement plans as tools for benchmarking progress towards goals. In addition, evidence that stakeholders' opinions are analyzed and reported to the public is likely to increase participation in future surveys.

Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning

A high-quality and effective 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 to 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, which include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The school'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 et al, 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 et al, 2008). According to Marks, Louis, & Printy (2002), school staff that engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, & Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective schools, "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 through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that 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.

Standard		Standard Performance Level
The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.		3.17
Indicator	**Source of Evidence**	**Performance Level**
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.	•Learning expectations for different courses and programs •Course, program, or school schedules •Course or program descriptions •Survey results •Lesson plans •Posted learning objectives •Enrollment patterns for various courses and programs •Descriptions of instructional techniques •Interviews, observations, and presentations	3

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.	•Curriculum guides •A description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment •Common assessments •Standards-based report cards •Program descriptions •Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps •Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum •Interviews, observations, presentations, and comparisons with national assessment scores	4
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation •Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource •Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool •Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices •Interdisciplinary projects •Interviews, observations, and presentations	3

3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	•Curriculum maps •Supervision and evaluation procedures •Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices •Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process •Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs •Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success •Interviews, observations, presentations, and implementation of the Marzano system	4
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	•Common language, protocols and reporting tools •Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees •Peer coaching guidelines and procedures •Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning •Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration •Examples of cross curricular or program projects, interdisciplinary instruction, and classroom action research projects •Interviews, observations, and presentations	3
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction •Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning •Interviews, observations, and presentations	3

3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	•Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs with references to district and school beliefs and values about teaching and learning •Records of meetings and informal feedback sessions •Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff	3
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.	•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days •Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress •Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process	3
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.	•Curriculum and activities of structures for adults advocating on behalf of students •Description of formalized structures for adults to advocate on behalf of students •Master schedule with time for formalized structure	2
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.	•Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting •District quality control procedures including the monitoring of grading practices across all schools •Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs •Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting	3

3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	•District professional development plan involving the district and all schools •Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs	4
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	•Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services •List of learning support services and student population served by such services •Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning •Data used to identify unique learning needs of students	3

Powerful Practices   *Indicator*

1. The School District of Palm Beach County drives curriculum and instruction for students through data-based evidence.   3.2

   The system leadership demonstrates a purposeful and deliberate approach to provide the resources necessary for staff members to monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

   Interviews with numerous stakeholders throughout the district -- administrators, parent/community members, and teachers -- provide strong evidence that system and school leaders use the Educational Data Warehouse (EDW) to analyze the strengths and needs of all students. Teachers use these data throughout the year to monitor their students' progress in mastering benchmarks and standards and to adjust instruction in a timely way.

   This combination of a constantly-updated repository of useful data, leadership's setting expectations for the use of the data, and the instructional staff's skill in interpreting and making use of data ensures that results drive the adjustment of curriculum and differentiation of instruction based on student need.

2. District and school leaders demonstrate a multifaceted commitment to student success through targeted professional development, dedication of resources, and using data to guide improvement efforts.

3.4

The district's leadership has demonstrated the importance of job-embedded collaborative learning opportunities to support improved instruction and student learning at all levels. Teachers participate in PL opportunities in which they learn about new instructional strategies. They then implement the new skill(s) in the classroom, and teachers/administrators evaluate evidence to judge the efficacy of strategies. The evidence ranged from teacher observations by a peer or administrator to teams of teachers reviewing student work. Much of this collaboration to ensure student success is completed during the Learning Team meetings. and other similar meetings. In addition, teacher interviews provided evidence that system and school-based personnel provide numerous additional tools necessary for instructional staff to improve student achievement. These include progress monitoring through district-created diagnostics, consistent use of the Educational Data Warehouse resources, the Learning Village curriculum resource bank, student-teacher "data chats," extensive support staffing (including instructional coaches, reading assistants, etc.), plus development of a proficiency-based reporting system for K-2. The district has mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of these initiatives.

District and school leaders' deployment of a variety of tools to promote student success in all schools is the foundation for its long-term record of improving student achievement.

3. All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning that is designed to build capacity to meet district, school, and individual goals.

3.11

Goal 3 of the district's new Strategic Plan indicates that a qualified and highly effective workforce is a priority for the district. There are extensive opportunities for professional development not only in content areas, but also in instructional best practices. Professional development is offered in a variety of formats including, but not limited to online courses and in person. Formats include large group, small group, and individual instruction. Professional Development is offered within and across areas, at the building level, Learning Team level, and informal study group. The focus for professional development is based on the review of student data and staff needs. Professional development is aligned to specific school improvement plans and is an integral part of improving student achievement.

The district's focus and effort placed on the importance and value of rigorous and continuous professional development underlies its record of increasing student achievement.

Opportunities for Improvement   ***Indicator***

1. Develop procedures and processes to ensure each student is well known by at least one adult advocate to support student success.
   Evidence from stakeholder interviews show inconsistencies and limited access to adult advocates for all students. The district does not as yet have consistent systems and structures to ensure that all students have an adult advocate, though artifacts show that some students, e.g., those in the exceptional education program, have explicitly identified case managers.

   Because Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan speaks to enactment of a Student-First Philosophy, in which meaningful follow-up, monitoring, and mentorships that provide support necessary to succeed are in place, the district will need to develop its systems for ensuring that each student receives appropriate support.

   3.9

2. Improve the communication and the coordination of learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students placed in alternative school settings.

   3.12

   Evidence from stakeholder interviews indicates a lack of timeliness and communication in the referral and placement process of students in alternative school placements. Artifacts show that a referral process and manual describing services and processes in detail are in place. Nonetheless, stakeholders will benefit from enhanced communication among all parties involved in alternative school placement; this will facilitate coordination of services between sending and receiving schools across the district, and are likely to improve transitions for students.

   In a district that believes in a Student First philosophy, teachers, parents and students benefit from thoughtful, timely, and coordinated services between traditional and alternative settings to ensure academic progress and success.

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems

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, 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 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staffs 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 to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard	Standard Performance Level
The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.	2.88

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	•Survey results •District budgets or financial plans for the last three years •District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools •School budgets or financial plans for last three years •Assessments of staffing needs •Documentation of highly qualified staff •Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools •Prof Dev - Pre-service, Clinical Ed, PNP I & II; Interview Guide & Question Bank; Vacancy Reports; Instructional Needs Analysis; Recruitment - Sessions, Schedules, Internet, Email Blasts, iTeach Grant; Unit Adjust/Voluntary Transfer Process; iObservation	3
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.	•Examples of school schedules •District quality assurance procedures showing district oversight of schools pertaining to school resources •Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources •Survey results •Examples of school calendars •Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction •Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction •District strategic plan showing resources support for district •¢Budget allocation formulas; Competitive Grant Funding; Business Partners; Learning Village Lesson Plans; Prof. Dev. Days; FCAT Blackout Bulletin; Absentee Policy; Student Progression Plans; Parent Telephone Callout System; SACs; Instructional Review	3

4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	•District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments •Example systems for school maintenance requests •Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements •Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments •Example maintenance schedules for schools •School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes •Example school records of depreciation of equipment •¢Custodial Allocation; Training Manual; Green Cleaning Manual; Safety Inspection; Tiriga Screen Print; Health Department Report Sample	3
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	•District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems •District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities, learning environments •Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments •Allocation Formulas; Academic Business Plan; Achievement Matters for All; EDW Dashboards; Bargaining Agreements; Facility Master Plan; 5 Year Capital Plan	3

4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	•Evaluation procedures and results of education resources •District education delivery model intended for school implementation including media and information resources to support the education program •Data on media and information resources available to students and staff •Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information •Staff Cert. Media/Computer Science; Tech Support Technicians; Acquisitions Handbook; Edline; TrainU; PD Calendar; Destiny Library Manager Reports; PBSD 1868; SDPBC Policy 8.12; Personnel Allocation Formulas; Capital & Categorical Fund Distributions Bulletins	3
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model •Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level •District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level •District quality control procedures that monitor the effectiveness of technology services at the district-level and school-level •Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness •District Technology Plan; Implementation Plan; IT Applications; IT Policies Level 3 Accreditation Report The School District of Palm Beach County SY	2

| 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. | •Student assessment system for identifying student needs

•Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support

•Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills

•Rubrics on developmentally appropriate benchmarks; e.g. early childhood education

•Examples of improvements made to education program and delivery models based on results of program effectiveness evaluations

•Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education

•List of support services available to students

•Student Development Plan; School Based Teams/Response to Intervention; Bullying Awareness and Prevention; Conflict Resolution; Character Education; Counselor Training Level 4 Accreditation Report The School District of Palm Beach County SY | 3 |
| 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. | •List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning

•Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning

•Description of IEP process

•District quality assurance procedures that monitor program effectiveness of student support services

•Description of referral process

•ePEP; Senior Graduation Audits; EDW Graduation and Postsecondary Status Reports; School Based Team/Response to Intervention | 3 |

Opportunities for Improvement   *Indicator*

1. Review and refine practices and implement programs to increase school
   readiness.   4.1
   Evidence from stakeholder interviews, program offerings, and staffing patterns
   indicate there are insufficient resources and personnel for early learning and early
   intervention programs. As a result, a significant number of students entering or
   enrolled in the primary grades are unprepared to engage in academic learning.
   The district's top leadership indicated that this was an area of need for the district.

   While funds are limited for such programs, the district must exhaust every option,
   including increasing community awareness of the need for enhanced Birth-K
   programs. Over the long term, investment in such programs will reap dividends like
   increased on-grade achievement, reductions in the need for remediation, improved
   student health, etc.

Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Systems with strong improvement processes are moving beyond anxiety about the current reality and
focusing on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, that is, data and other information, to
guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, &
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 et al., 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 school 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).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world
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		Standard Performance Level
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.		3.6
Indicator	Source of Evidence	Performance Level

5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model •Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols •Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local or school assessments on student learning and school performance •Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness •Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free	4
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.	•Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning •District quality control procedures that monitor schools in effectively using data to improve instruction and student learning •List of data sources related to district effectiveness •Survey results •Written protocols and procedures for data collection and analysis •Examples of changes to the district strategic plan based on data results •Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning •List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning	3

5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	•Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data •Documentation of attendance and training related to data use •Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data •Policies and written procedures specific to data training	4
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.	•Policies and procedures specific to data use and training •Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data •Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning •Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans •Evidence of student readiness for the next level •Evidence of student growth •Evidence of student success at the next level	4

| 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. | •District quality control procedures for monitoring district effectiveness

•Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals

•Survey results

•Communication plan regarding student learning, systems that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders

•Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals

•District quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, systems that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals

•Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement

•Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups | 3 |

Powerful Practices   *Indicator*

1. Strong use of data platforms establish a comprehensive student assessment system.   5.1

    The district's data-driven culture is evident in its systematic use of valid formative and summative assessments and its comprehensive structure for ensuring that instructional personnel have the resources needed to gauge ongoing student performance. The Educational Data Warehouse is embedded in the single district culture framework. The EDW provides a common framework for standards and instructional goals for the district. Area EDW trainers work to support area schools from a data support and training perspective. Stakeholder and teacher interviews clearly identified that the EDW is used on a weekly basis to access assessment data in order to make "just in time" adjustments to learning. This process also drives the focus of professional development activities at both the district and school levels. In addition the Learning Village, a curriculum resource bank, provides teachers across subject areas additional common assessments aligned with instructional activities, tools for reteaching and differentiation, etc.

    The district's deep commitment to rich, varied assessment tools and supports are a major factor in its record of increasing student achievement.

2. District personnel have a systematic process to train and support all staff in both interpretation and use of data for the purpose of making informed decisions.

    5.3

    The application of data is embedded in the district culture. A commitment to data analysis and use is evident through the ongoing development and use of the EDW system. The district has committed district level data staffing, area EDW specialists and school based EDW liaisons to the process of training and use of the system to impact student performance. Use of the system is evidenced by over 1.7 million data reports generated last school year. Interviews at the school level verify the overall administrative and teacher use of the system to filter, drill down and merge data to draw conclusions that drive instruction.

    The district's focus on application of data to instructional decision-making helps to ensure alignment of improvement efforts in support of common school and district goals.

3. The district engages in a continuous, results-based process to improve student learning which includes assessment of readiness for the next level.

    5.4

    The Education Data Warehouse (EDW) has various electronic reports that display past trends and current data. The teachers have access to their classroom data through reports that verify student achievement. Schools can compare themselves to other schools within the county and to other Florida schools using the reports; in addition, there is evidence that district results are analyzed in relation to national and international benchmarks. They can also compare themselves nationally to National Assessment of Educational Progress and College Readiness data. Parents have access to EdLine, an online parent portal which allows them to retrieve their children's performance assessments, check classroom assignments, and communicate with teachers. The Palm Beach School District's website provides the policy and report for program evaluation for public viewing. The district has clear protocols for assessing student readiness using the state pupil progression guidelines. The impact over time of the district's many coordinated efforts to improve student learning is evident in its having earned an "A" rating from the state of Florida for eight consecutive years. In addition, the district was recently a finalist for the Broad Prize for urban school districts that have raised achievement for all students.

    The EDW system is used by staff at all levels of the system to inform a variety of decisions and to guide instructional and operational actions. A data-oriented culture to improve student learning based on a multiple measures of student progress provides a reliable, robust system for assessing student progress.

Learning Environment

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. External review team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a 4 point scale with 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 7 learning environments included in ELEOT.

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool

Environments	*Level*
A. Equitable Learning Environment	2.8
B. High Expectations Environment	2.9
C. Supportive Learning Environment	3.0
D. Active Learning Environment	3.0
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	2.8
F. Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.2
G. Digital Learning Environment	1.9

Part II: Conclusion
Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

A group of 35 educators from 15 states conducted the External Review for The School District of Palm Beach County , Florida, from January 27-30, 2013. The team was co-led by Dr. Michael Lodico and Dr. Nikki Armato. Charles Dailey of Lee County Schools in Florida served as Associate Lead Evaluator. Because of the size and complexity of the district, the 11th largest in the United States, including 173 schools and 14 special programs, preparations for the review required intensive effort over a two-month span by the team members. The school district provided evidence that their preparations had begun 18 months prior to the visit. Three staff members in the district's School Improvement Department coordinated all the preparations, which included gathering of over 1,000 electronic artifacts, coordination of the interviews with 273 stakeholders on Monday, and visits to 34 schools. The district's preparation for the visit was exemplary.

The district was first accredited under the AdvancED protocol in 2008. During his overview, the superintendent briefed the team on progress on the previous team's Required Actions, as well as ways to leverage the 2008 Commendations. The team had access to the 2008 report, as well as the 2010 Accreditation Progress Report, which are posted on the district's web site. In addition, the district provided evidence showing that a comprehensive process of internal reviews mirroring district accreditation protocols have been taking place routinely since 2008. The foregoing is a sign that The School District of Palm Beach County is committed in culture and in action to using the accreditation process as a method of quality assurance.

The district involved numerous stakeholders in the process of its self-assessment, though the Accreditation Report was less explicit about the district's challenges than about its successes. Team members, however, found the district stakeholders -- board members, superintendent, chief officers, school leaders, teachers, and parents -- frank and open in interviews about identifying areas for improvement.

In preparation for the visit, the district shared with the team leaders demographic and achievement information about all the schools so that those selected for visits would represent a cross-section of the district as a whole. In addition, the district gathered and uploaded to a Sharepoint site over 1,000 electronic artifacts indexed by standard and indicator.

Stakeholder perspectives were provided by interviews with six board members; the superintendent and his three chief officers; 187 principals and program directors; representatives of unions, Board Advisory committees, and district business partners and parental organizations; internal stakeholders including the budget/finance office, the five areas of the district, alternative education, all areas of curriculum and learning support, school safety, facilities, quality assurance, research, real estate, transportation, public

information, human resources, general counsel, the inspector general, labor relations, school food service, and technology, among others. In addition, as part of the 34 school visits, team members interviewed the school improvement teams, as well as representatives of parent organizations and teachers. In the course of classroom visits, team members were able to talk informally with students about their learning environments.

In all, the team had both broad and deep access to both stakeholders and artifacts to develop sound ratings on the standards and to devise actions to validate the district's successes and to address its continuous improvement needs.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

The External Review team devised Powerful Practices in the following areas:
--Commitment to the "Student-First" philosophy is evident district-wide.
--The Single School Culture is systemic throughout the district.
--Data-based evidence drives curriculum and instruction for students.
--The district demonstrates a commitment to ensure student success.
--All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.
--Strong use of data establishes a comprehensive student assessment system.
--District personnel have a systematic process to train and support all staff in both interpretation and use of data for the purpose of making informed decisions.
--The district engages in a continuous process to improve student learning including readiness for the next level.

Team members were particularly impressed with the data-centric culture of the district as a whole, evident in the wealth of pertinent data available through its Educational Data Warehouse, the ease of access to myriad types of data, and the demonstrated commitment to ensuring that all staff have the expertise needed to interpret and apply data in their areas of responsibility. In addition, the team noted that the district as a whole, while large and diverse, has many of the characteristics of a professional learning community, with an impressive dedication to professional learning, with opportunities both for meeting district-wide goals and meeting the needs of individual schools and personnel.

The following Opportunities for Improvement were noted:
--Establish procedures to ensure that stakeholder surveys are shared with all stakeholders.
--Develop procedures and processes to ensure each student is well known by at least one adult advocate to support student success.
--Improve the communication and coordination of learning support services to meet the unique needs of students placed in alternative school settings.
--Review and refine practices and implement programs to increase school readiness.

The External Review Team noted that while stakeholder surveys are routinely conducted, a consistent method of sharing and using those data was lacking, particularly in the last two years. More significantly,

the district's commitment to a providing truly personalized education for every student will require that it develop systems for ensuring that all students have at least one adult advocate, that all involved stakeholders understand the processes and routines for to and from alternative programs, and that there be a focused effort for improving services to pre-Kindergarten children. The challenges -- and the importance -- of the last was noted by both the superintendent and the chief academic officer in interviews.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

The External Review Team conducted 267 classroom observations in 34 schools using the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool (ELEOT). Observations focused on the learner, and team members used the time to experience learning as it was taking place. They looked, listened, and talked with students. These observations provided evidence of classroom environments consistent with the Single School Culture. In classrooms across the district there were examples of students actively engaged in a variety of learning experiences appropriate to their needs. Students were well behaved and gave evidence of awareness of established rules and expectations.

Owing to time limitations, the AdvancED research office allowed the External Review team to use a sample of the ELEOT forms in calculating the Learning Environment ratings. The data reported constitute slightly more than 50% of the completed ELEOTs, with observations from all 34 schools visited included. The composite ratings showed six out of seven of the environments rated as "evident." One environment -- Digital Learning, which gauges student use of the tools of instructional technology -- was rated as "somewhat evident."

The External Review of The School District of Palm Beach County was a massive undertaking, requiring unusual dedication on the part of the school district and the review team. Three district personnel -- Dr. Diane Conley, Dianna Weinbaum, Cheryl Baker -- respectively, Director, Specialist, and Manager of the School Improvement and District Accreditation Office, were instrumental in attending to countless logistical details of coordinating the aggregation of hundreds of artifacts, managing accreditation committees, and identifying and organizing the hundreds of stakeholders involved in the External Review. In addition, the stakeholders appeared cognizant of the expectations of accreditation, largely owing to the district's conduct of regular internal reviews aligned with AdvancED standards and protocols. The district was very attentive to everything needed by the team both prior to and during the on-site review.

The School District of Palm Beach County's multi-faceted preparation for the External Review honored the purposes and expectations of the Systems Accreditation protocol. As a result, the External Review Team recommends that The School District of Palm Beach County be granted a new five-year term of accreditation by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

Required Actions

1. Review, expand, and refine practices and programs in all schools to engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.

   Primary Indicator or Assurance: 3.8

   Evidence from stakeholder interviews and school visits indicate inconsistencies in family engagement practices across the district both in the types of services offered and the procedures for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness.

   As family engagement is identified as a priority in the strategic plan 2013 and is a fundamental component in attaining the district mission, this area provides opportunities for improvement.   District guidance is needed in defining expectations for creation, implementation, monitoring and evaluating programs and processes for meaningful family engagement. Building district capacity to expand the diversity and robustness of outreach strategies would be advantageous. In addition, developing a culture of a mutually beneficial parent-school interactions provides opportunities for parent and student accountability in the educational process.

2. Analyze and evaluate instructional strategies throughout the secondary level to ensure high-leverage, research-based strategies are being consistently implemented.

   Primary Indicator or Assurance: 3.1

   Evidence from classroom observations revealed the need to increase the use of effective research-based instructional strategies, and the need to increase technology integration for the purpose of increasing student achievement and ensure equitable access to digital learning tools for all students. Classroom observations and reports by school and district leaders indicated a concern that reliance on traditional instruction in secondary classrooms was a barrier to innovation and to increased student engagement.

   Additional research and professional development for both teachers and administrators can ensure that such recognized best practices as differentiated instruction, technology integration, project-based learning, etc., are operationalized and supported within various classrooms and around the district.

3. Develop and implement opportunities for teams to collaborate among and across schools, programs, and grade levels.

   Primary Indicator or Assurance: 3.5

While the Learning Team Meetings (LTMs) provide a profound opportunity for horizontal and vertical alignment within a school, there are opportunities to increase collaboration among buildings through collegial dialogue and planning (e.g., collaborative planning with fourth grade teachers from different schools, collaborative planning with eighth and ninth grade science teachers from different schools, instructional walkthroughs by vertical and horizontal teams, development of essential vocabulary, etc.). The district's use of the Learning Village is a rich resource to increase alignment in curriculum and assignment. Continued development of this tool to ensure that consistently high quality resources are available in all areas, along with clear expectations for the use of the Learning Village will promote alignment across the district.

Improved alignment systems will promote consistent curriculum will ensure that students have appropriate background knowledge and skills for success at each grade level, as well as helping to diminish the problems faced by students transferring within the district. Finally, increasing systems for networking will afford staff members opportunities for sharing the wealth of effective practices within and among grades, departments, and schools.

4. Implement the district's plan to increase student use of technology for learning in the classroom.

   Primary Indicator or Assurance: 4.6

Teachers in the district appear to have ample instructional technology to enhance lessons; the district has invested a considerable amount of money to purchase computers, though stakeholders expressed concerns that they will be largely used for assessment purposes. Evidence from stakeholder interviews, review of technology plans, and school and classroom observations indicate there is insufficient technology in place in schools for all students to learn, acquire and analyze information, and to create, communicate, and collaborate with others using digital tools.

The district has developed a strong, detailed plan to enhance use of 21st century digital tools. It includes a thorough analysis of strengths and shortcomings in such areas as addressing the digital divide, integration of technology into instruction, use of technology to empower students, promote collaboration, and differentiate educational experiences. A renewed commitment to the goals of the plan will enable the district to meet its goal of ensuring students can "perform and compete successfully in the global knowledge economy."

Part III: Addenda

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all 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. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the Team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

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, along with 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 (founded 1917) joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students. The Northwest Accreditation Commission joined the AdvancED network in 2011.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.