



**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL**

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MEMORANDUM

June 13, 2018

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Donald E. Fennoy II, Ed.D., Superintendent
Keith Oswald, Deputy Superintendent/Chief of Schools
Mark Howard, Chief, Performance Accountability

SUBJECT: FY18 ADVANCED DISTRICT ACCREDITATION

On January 28-31, 2018, the District earned system-wide accreditation by undergoing a rigorous Accreditation process with AdvancED. The accrediting agency, AdvancED, is a non-profit, non-partisan international organization that conducts rigorous, on-site system quality reviews of Pre-K through 12 schools and school systems to help educators and their communities ensure that all learners realize their full potential. Using a set of research-based standards, the accreditation process examines the whole system; programs, cultural context and the community of stakeholders, to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of learners. Through the AdvancED Accreditation Process, highly skilled and trained Engagement Review Teams (ERT) gather first-hand evidence and information pertinent to evaluating an institution's performance against the research-based AdvancED Performance Standards.

In preparation for the AdvancED review, each school, as well as the system, engaged in a self-assessment process by aligning the current District work to the AdvancED Quality Factors. During the Engagement Review, 991 stakeholders were interviewed (Table 1.). In addition, 46 schools received onsite visits by ERT members and in those schools, 438 classrooms were observed using the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool (eleot®).

Table 1.

Stakeholders	Interviews	Poll Interviews	Total
Superintendent	1		1
System Leadership	24		24
Regional Superintendents	5		5
Instructional Superintendents	11		11
School Board		7	7
Parent/Community	127	81	208
School Leaders	133	132	265
Teachers	141	46	187
Students	230	53	283
TOTAL			991

In addition, 66 District operated Early Learning programs also underwent their own rigorous review in order to earn accreditation that leads to Florida Gold Seal Certification. Of the 66 Early Learning programs, all scored above 90% (with 13 scoring at 100%, and 58 programs scoring at 99%).

Findings

The ERT review included an understanding of the District's improvement processes which began in the system two years ago. In 2015, the District began an intensive self-study to inform its improvement planning processes; the Five-Year Strategic Plan. The ERT was able to clearly identify the current work being done through the themes and initiatives. Information gained from the school site visits, as well as stakeholder interviews, indicated that data used to impact instruction is an expectation. In addition, the ERT stated they could see that quality teaching in the District, included using data to differentiate and guide instruction.

The ERT recognized that the District engages in many powerful practices that yield clear results in student achievement and organizational effectiveness. In order to be considered a "Powerful Practice" by AdvancED, these practices must exceed what is typically observed or even expected in a system. In addition, other schools and districts are often referred to our District's Powerful Practices in order to improve themselves. The following were identified as SDPBC Powerful Practices:

- **Powerful Practice #1:** The School District of Palm Beach County has developed and is implementing a powerful continuous improvement process that is yielding gains in student achievement, garnering strong support for the system and its initiatives and continues to support a Culture of Excellence.
- **Powerful Practice #2:** The system implements processes to identify the specialized needs of learners, as well as gathers and analyzes assessment data from multiple sources to assess the learning progress of students.

The ERT also identified opportunities for the District to improve:

- **Improvement Opportunity:** Implement with fidelity supervision practices, mentoring/coaching practices, and professional learning opportunities that provide meaningful feedback to change teaching practice and to inform professional learning decisions.
- **Improvement Priority #1:** Ensure that students have the opportunity to develop skills in innovation, collaboration, and problem-solving through instructional strategies that are engaging and differentiated according to student need with an additional focus on the use of technology in support of learning.
- **Improvement Priority #2:** Establish and implement a formalized and documented process that will ensure all learners develop positive relationships with an adult/peer on a regularly scheduled basis throughout their educational experiences.

The School District of Palm Beach County continues its standing of being a fully accredited district for the next five years. The results and full report are being shared with District Leadership, school leadership, teachers, and all stakeholders. [Please click here to access the Final AdvancED Engagement Report.](#)

If you have questions about District Accreditation, please contact Mark Howard, Chief of Performance Accountability, at 434-8851 or Keith Oswald, Deputy Superintendent, Chief of Schools at 649-6805.