



Report of the Quality Assurance Review Team for Duval County Public Schools

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AdvancED is the parent organization of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE). NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

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About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

Background

Founded in 1895, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and Schools (SACS CASI) accredit public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, Latin America, and the Department of Defense Schools worldwide.

In 2006, NCA CASI, SACS CASI, and the research and development arm of the accrediting associations, the National Study of School Evaluation, unified to form AdvancED. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 23,000 schools in 65 countries, serving 15 million students.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI and SACS CASI have defined shared, research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help schools, school districts, and educational service agencies continuously improve.

The Accreditation Process

To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, school districts and their schools must:

- 1) Meet the AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems.** School districts demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.
- 2) Engage in continuous improvement.** School districts and their schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose that the school district is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school and district effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).
- 3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** School districts and schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, school districts host an external quality assurance review team once every five years. The team evaluates the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and recommendations to help the school district improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school district and a written report detailing the team's recommendations. The school district acts on the team's recommendations and submits a progress report two years following the review.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI accreditation engages the entire school district community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help school districts and their schools maximize student success and improve organizational effectiveness.

Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

Purpose

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

1. Evaluate the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards.
2. Assess the efficacy of the district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and recommendations to improve the district and its schools.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation for review by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

A key aim of the quality assurance review is to verify that the school district is operating with institutional integrity – that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students and other stakeholders.

School District Preparation

To prepare for the Quality Assurance Review, the school district and the community complete the AdvancED Standards Assessment Report. The report engages the district in an in-depth self assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. The school district identifies and describes the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each standard. Through this internal review, the school district examines how its systems and processes contribute to student performance and school district effectiveness.

Summary of Team Activities

The Quality Assurance Review Team is led by an AdvancED certified team chair and comprised of professionals from outside the school district. The team reviews the findings of the school district's internal self-assessment, conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders, reviews student performance data and other documentation provided by the school district, and observes practices and daily operations. The team engages in professional deliberations to reach consensus on the school district's adherence to the standards for accreditation. The team provides an oral exit report and prepares a written Quality Assurance Review Team Report designed to help the school district and its schools improve.

Using the Report – Acting on the Recommendations

The school district uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school district is held accountable for addressing the recommendations identified in the report. The AdvancED State Office is available to assist the school district in addressing the recommendations. Two years following the Quality Assurance Review Team visit, the school district must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress it has made on the team's recommendations. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school district is addressing the recommendations.

Accreditation Recommendation

The Quality Assurance Review Team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school district following action from the commission.

Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), a division of AdvancED, visited Duval County Public Schools on October 5-8, 2008.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed: 297 administrators, 322 teachers, 139 support staff, 258 parents and business partners, 228 students and 7 Board of Education members for a total of 1,251 stakeholders. In addition to meeting with district personnel and stakeholders, the team visited 30 schools within the school district. During the school visits, team members interviewed school stakeholders, observed classrooms, and reviewed relevant school artifacts.

Throughout the visit, the team reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the district. Specifically, the team examined the district's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

- Vision and Purpose
- Governance and Leadership
- Teaching and Learning
- Documenting and Using Results
- Resource and Support Systems
- Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
- Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The Quality Assurance Review Team used the standards to guide its review of the school district, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school district and its schools function as a whole and embody the practices and characteristics of a quality school district. Through its examination of the school district's adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review Team prepared reports on each standard, highlighting strengths and suggestions for improvement specific to each standard. These reports can be found following this summary.

The Quality Assurance Review Team also examined the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance. The team reviewed the district's practices and methods to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results. The team's findings in this area can be found following the standard reports.

The team used the standard reports and quality assurance findings to identify common themes, significant accomplishments, and pressing needs facing the district. These became the basis for the overall commendations and recommendations that are provided below. The commendations and recommendations should serve as the focus for the district as it acts on the team's findings. They represent the areas that the team believes will have the greatest impact in helping the district further its improvement efforts. The standard reports and quality assurance findings can be used to help reinforce and enrich the district's understanding of the commendations and recommendations.

Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the Duval County Public Schools for the following strengths and accomplishments. While additional strengths are noted in the detailed review of each standard that appears later in this report, the commendations listed below are the strengths that the team believes are most deserving of being highlighted.

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the Duval County Public Schools for the following:

1. **The district has demonstrated and modeled how to use the development of the Standards Assessment Report as a means to engage a wide variety of stakeholders in a comprehensive self-assessment process.** A variety of procedures were used to communicate with stakeholders about the standards, gather evidence as to how they were being met and to analyze and rate the standards and indicators. This stimulated rich dialogue, engaged a great number of people and created a common language and understanding throughout the system. Each school was required to replicate this process by developing a school Standards Assessment Report. As part of the district's internal quality assurance, these reports are reviewed by district staff and feedback provided. The systemic process of assessing and reporting on AdvancED's standards at the district and school levels significantly contributes to shaping a culture of continuous self-study and growth.
2. **The administration of Duval County Schools has honored their responsibility to provide leadership by establishing a strong direction and framework for continuous improvement.** The district's vision, mission, beliefs, commitments and goals have been unified into a coherent strategic plan with strategies and measurements for each target. The plan was developed by a community task force and senior district staff with assistance from the Alliance for World Class Education. Stakeholders express widespread commitment and support for the plan. This plan articulates a clear direction for the system's schools, departments, leaders, and stakeholders. It provides the foundation to guide system-wide policies, decisions, and actions aimed to ensure every student will graduate with the knowledge and skills to be successful.
3. **The professional learning and development of staff at all levels is a high priority in Duval County Schools.** The commitment of time and resources allocated for staff development illustrates this value. The alignment of professional learning experiences to the vision and goals plus the scope and type of opportunities available give evidence of richness and quality. Staff in Duval benefit greatly from their association and the workshops they receive from the renowned Schultz Center. Most notable, however, is the instructional leadership and the collaborative and job-embedded learning opportunities that occur at the schools. The Peer-to-Peer Best Practice described in the Standards Assessment Report models the purpose and behaviors of a professional learning community. A skilled staff with the commitment and "know how" to meet diverse student needs is the key to achieving Duval's shared vision. Quality professional learning provides the means to build the capacity of staff and to model life-long learning.
4. **The board, superintendent and administrative staff work as a team to provide informed and effective leadership.** They are visionaries with an authentic commitment to their shared purpose and the commitment to align resources to achieve it. Leaders are aware and respectful of each other's roles and responsibilities and value their relationships with the public, community leaders, and internal stakeholders. District leaders are admired, trusted and appreciated by stakeholders. Board members are well informed and skilled at working together. They participate as a team in a workshop developed by the National Board and The Broad School

Board Leadership Training. This enhances their effectiveness in fulfilling their responsibilities as board members. It is important for district leadership to be able to collaborate and govern in ways that provide the system with direction, support and an unrelenting focus on achievement of the vision for student learning.

Recommendations

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following recommendations for improvement. The team focused its recommendations on those areas that, if addressed, will have the greatest impact on improving student performance and overall effectiveness of the school district. The Duval County Public Schools will be held accountable for making progress on each of the recommendations noted in this section. Two years following this review, the school district will be asked to submit a progress report on these recommendations. The district should refer to the detail provided in the standard reports for guidance and greater depth on the recommendations.

1. **Engage in a causal analysis to gain deeper insight into the achievement gap so that equity can be attained.** Achieving equity should mean; providing all students with what they need to learn – not giving all students the same thing. Widespread concern over differences in student performance was evident throughout the visit. The examination of data gleaned from stakeholder interviews, artifacts and observations gave evidence of inconsistencies in numerous areas that impact student learning. Differences in the effectiveness of communications, quality of facilities, resource distribution, fidelity of program implementation, teacher support, and staff quality were apparent. These discrepancies compromise the ability of some schools to increase student learning and reduce the achievement gap. Attention to these variables will enable you to purposefully and systematically target and allocate the support, resources, and initiatives in your system to better meet your vision of student success.
2. **Create coherence and completeness to your assessment system so it effectively informs and guides teaching and learning.** A great deal of summative information from standardized and district measures is collected, organized and communicated. It is used to drive instructional decisions, plan professional development and allocate resources. The district has developed formative assessments for some subjects that are used several times a year to determine intervention needs. Data collected shows the potential of formative assessments is not yet realized in the district. Formatives should be increased in both scope and in use so they play an ongoing and significant role in informing teaching and learning. Teacher generated classroom assessments are an integral component of a quality assessment system. They have the capacity to provide relevant “just in time” information needed to guide day-to-day instructional decisions and actions. Evidence shows variation across the system in the understanding and implementation of these types of assessments. Professional learning on how to develop and use classroom assessments coupled with coaching and support will ensure this practice becomes embedded and implemented throughout the system. These three types of assessments compliment each other and when combined create a system of information that guides improvement and verifies results.
3. **Evaluate current programs and initiatives to identify what works and develop procedures to ensure they are matched or aligned with needs, being implemented properly, and set up for sustainability.** The district has selected and made available a wealth of programs to target the vision and goals in the strategic plan. These programs should be reviewed and evaluated for relevance and impact. Evidence indicates a lack of clarity regarding when, where

and how to use programs in addition to disparity in the competence and confidence of staff to effectively put them into practice. Programs are often implemented in isolation and therefore do not benefit from the synergy of coordination. The reinstatement of the Program Review process will contribute to a systematic approach for studying and making decisions about the quality and relevance of programs and initiatives. With this in place programs can be matched to needs and then synthesized into rich and multifaceted initiatives.

4. **Examine the district’s communication system in order to learn how to successfully message and reach all stakeholders.** Duval’s communication methods are very rich in scope and quality; however, there exists groups of hard to reach stakeholders. As a result, segments of the community lack information, opportunities for participation and a means for decision-making. Study the effectiveness of various communication methods in reaching different stakeholder groups. Use this knowledge and insight to help create, deliver, and monitor communication strategies that target these hard to reach stakeholders. Two - way communication is a critical factor in organizational performance and effectiveness. Once strengthened, it can be leveraged to help increase parent involvement and student learning.
5. **Devise and implement system-wide procedures to ensure collaborative horizontal planning and vertical articulation.** District stakeholders expressed high importance and appreciation for professional learning communities, collegial dialogue, and a systems approach to teaching and learning. These valued concepts, however, are not embedded in the culture. Collaborative horizontal planning within grade levels and subjects was evidenced within but not among schools. Communication between elementary, middle and high school levels was inconsistent. Vehicles for bringing people from different schools together to share challenges and collaborate on solutions will help build a professional learning community. Dialogue around curricular content and instructional practice will contribute to alignment across the district and facilitate system coherence for students as they transition from grade to grade and school to school. Horizontal and vertical planning may also provide a medium for addressing inconsistencies and discrepancies the system is experiencing.

Next Steps

The school district 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 commendations section to maximize their impact on student performance and the effectiveness of the school district.
3. Develop action plans to address the recommendations made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the recommendations.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school district’s efforts to improve student performance and district effectiveness.
5. Two years following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the team’s recommendations. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the recommendations. Lack of progress can result in a change in accreditation status.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Resources

AdvancED offers a range of resources to support your school district as it acts on the findings in this report. The AdvancED Research and Development division provides online resources, research, handbooks, and tools to assist school districts and their schools with continuous improvement. In addition, your state office provides hands-on professional development and ongoing technical assistance. Contact your state office for assistance in accessing these resources.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for review and action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and communicates it to the school district. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school district should celebrate its achievement with the community. Flags, door decals, diploma seals, and other related items can be ordered from the website to help you share your accomplishment with your community.

Summary

The accreditation process engages the school district, its schools, and community in an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. The next steps in this journey are to build on the commendations and address the recommendations noted in this report. Doing so will enable the school district to advance in its quest for excellence and deepen the fulfillment of its mission for all students.

Standard Reports

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the district demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The Quality Assurance Review Team divided into standard teams to review each standard and prepare a standards report summarizing the team's findings. These standard reports, along with the quality assurance findings that follow these reports, provided the basis for the team's identification of over-arching commendations and recommendations presented earlier in this report. The reports submitted by each team are provided on the following pages for the district's review and use. Each report reflects its respective team's unique voice, perspective, and deliberations. The reports can be used to help enrich and deepen the district's understanding of the overall commendations and recommendations.

Vision and Purpose

STANDARD: The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a purpose and direction that is shared system-wide. The leadership establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the system's vision that is supported by system and school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and district effectiveness. The system's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

Description

The district's vision and purpose along with the Core Beliefs provide focus and direction for all stakeholders. The board developed Core Beliefs and Core Commitments which provided the foundation for the district strategic plan. The district has clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with its vision which is supported by internal and external stakeholders. The superintendent indicates the district has a moral imperative to ensure that all students learn at high levels. This is evident through the allocations of time, human, material and fiscal resources. It is apparent that the vision has been clearly and effectively communicated through a variety of media. Interviews and artifacts provide an abundance of evidence that illustrates a cascading of the vision and purpose from the superintendent to all stakeholders.

The district's vision and purpose have been translated into specific goals for students. In support of the vision, purpose and Core Beliefs, a number of research-based programs and strategies are being implemented in varying degrees across the district. Interviews substantiated the utilization of research based programs being implemented such as: professional learning communities, DeSensi, GearUp, Exceleator, Read 180, Renaissance Academies, Learning to Finish, America's Choice, College Board Spring Board, Keystone, Credit Recovery, Career Academies, RiverDeep, Looking Glass, Fast Forward, Compass Odyssey, Target, My Test and AIDE.

Communication of the vision and purpose is highly evidenced through newsletters, district and individual school websites, television and radio broadcasts, and meetings of internal stakeholders throughout the district. Additionally, Academic and Community Excellence (ACE) meetings held periodically throughout the district provide an open forum for public input.

As evidenced by interviews and review of procedures and practices, an established process is in place to ensure that the district vision and purpose remain current and aligned with its expectations for student learning and overall effectiveness of both the district and the schools.

Strengths

The team noted several successful practices and attributes deserving of recognition:

- The system’s website is an effective means of communicating information to the public and staff.
- The pursuit of stakeholder involvement through periodic community meetings and other offerings promotes the vision of academic achievement for ALL students.
- The simultaneous development and refinement of the vision, purpose and strategic plan provided strong alignment.

Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Employ additional systematic methods of acquiring and ensuring the involvement of hard to reach stakeholders in an effort to ensure the equitable participation of all stakeholders across the diverse community.
- Allocate additional resources in the form of multiple language translations to bridge the language barrier for more broad communication of the vision and purpose.
- Gather stakeholder feedback and input occur annually.

Finding

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational**, indicating that the Duval County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Vision and Purpose standard.

Governance and Leadership

STANDARD: The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the system’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 function with clearly defined authority and responsibility and encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for system and school improvement among stakeholders. The system’s policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Description

The Duval County Public Schools has established written policies and procedures that promote stability in the leadership and governance of the school district. The seven-member board is elected to terms of four years and may be re-elected for one additional term. Written policies outline the expectation that

board members participate in training and attend state and national conferences on a regular basis. All board members have participated in National Board workshop training and *The Broad School Board Leadership Training*.

The superintendent is an energetic, visionary leader who is passionate about the success of all students in Duval County Public Schools. District staff, parents and community members seem appreciative of the superintendent's willingness to acknowledge the role of both internal and external stakeholders in the continuous improvement process of the district.

Duval County Public Schools have developed a comprehensive process for establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school system and its schools by utilizing the Reform Governance Management process. This process ensures that the school board is continually reviewing and updating policies.

A collaborative process was used to develop and communicate a five year strategic plan. This document provides a meaningful direction and a relevant focus for the district as it strives to improve on a continuous basis.

The district provides a variety of ways for internal and external stakeholders to assume leadership roles and to contribute to the district's decision-making process. Community members are welcome to participate in board meetings during the public comment portion of the agenda. Town hall meetings are regularly held by board members to gather feedback and share information on district initiatives. The superintendent has made it a priority to be visible in the community. The public is also encouraged to participate in focus groups within the district including school advisory committees and parent-teacher associations. District staff takes an active role in the governance and leadership of the district through participation in the Principal Association, Parent Teacher Student Association, and school and district formed advisory committees.

The board is to be commended for appropriately exercising its authority of the district while allowing the superintendent to perform his responsibilities as the Chief Executive Officer. The positive relationship between the board, superintendent and administrative staff creates a unified base of leadership that provides guidance and support throughout the system.

The district maintains legal counsel. The attorney advises the superintendent and board members of legal matters and assists in policy development ensuring that policies meet local, state, and federal compliance. Records indicate that the board attorney attends all school board meetings, retreats, and policy committee meetings.

Collaboration networks and agencies within the community support and strengthen the financial resources available to the district. Evidence of this commitment is demonstrated through the numerous grants, foundations, and private donors.

Strengths

The team noted several areas deserving recognition: There is evidence of:

- Trust, respect and collaboration throughout the entire school community.
- An overwhelming passion by all stakeholders for the district to provide outstanding educational opportunities for all students.
- Tremendous respect for the superintendent exists across the district and community.

- Strong sense of collaboration between school board and superintendent toward development, analysis, and revision of district policies and procedures.
- High stakeholder involvement evidenced by partnerships with students, teachers, parents, administrators and community stakeholders.
- Ownership of the board of education to model continuous improvement through participation in professional development.

Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Clearly define “equity” in district policy to ensure that all stakeholders understand the meaning and applicability in the district.
- Develop procedural guides for district policies and clearly communicate these to all internal and external stakeholders.
- Develop flowcharts for policies to support fidelity of implementation and understanding with clear alignment to district policies.
- Fully implement the quality improvement process of Plan, Do, Study, Act to guide the systematic analysis of student performance and system analysis.

Finding

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational**, indicating that the Duval County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Governance and Leadership standard.

Teaching and Learning

STANDARD: The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it 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. The system ensures that teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process; provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations; and give students feedback to improve their performance.

Description

Duval County Public Schools has implemented an operational curriculum based on expectations for student learning, which is a part of the validation process of benchmark alignment with Florida’s Sunshine State Standards. Viable goals and objectives for the K-12 curriculum have been defined by the national, state, and district standards.

The district faces a number of challenges that stem from an urban core, student mobility, truancy, staff retention, hard to reach parents, disparity of resources, and homogeneity of student demographics resulting from choice. Evidence indicates these realities have impacted the achievement gap and low performing schools. The district is making progress in improving schools, systematically and incrementally, and in meeting the learning needs of all students.

The foundation of the teaching and learning processes is imbedded in the district's vision and strategic plan. The district ensures that school missions and goals are aligned with the district strategic plan. This mission is understood by site administrators at all schools as it umbrellas their own school mission. The prevailing document is the new district strategic plan which administrators and teachers feel has brought them together as a district and has restored trust at the school level about their teaching and learning initiatives. The district honors the Sunshine State Standards and has enhanced them with additional standards and rigor.

To meet the diverse learning needs of students, a wealth of programs, technologies and learning initiatives have been identified and brought in to the district. School and district leadership must ensure that students have access to the appropriate programs, resources and assistance they need to learn and be successful.

There are a large number of low performing (D and F) schools at the middle and high school level plus disparities in the allocation and implementation of programs and resources. While improvement initiatives have begun to address these issues, the district must be relentless in its commitment to understand conditions impacting these schools and in its actions to support, monitor, and improve them.

Strengths

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- A comprehensive professional development program provides research-based training designed to student achievement.
- The district has created a climate that promotes a common culture throughout the teaching and learning communities.
- The district has made great strides in its collaboration with schools and the establishment and support of professional learning communities (PLCs), which are focused on the academic programs in core content areas.
- The district is committed to a high level of quality teaching in each school that is monitored and supported through administrative walk-throughs. District coaches are available to help support school level instructional coaches by providing professional development, mentoring, modeling, assistance with data analysis, and helping schools secure needed resources.
- The implementation of learning schedules has increased the access to a uniform curriculum across the district. The schools are beginning to use the extensive learning plans to pace and guide their instruction.

Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Conduct a thorough examination of research and literature on effective practices that have contributed to success in low performing schools. Translating and customizing research and best practices into specific plans for low performing schools will provide an agenda for action and a means for evaluating progress.
- Focus teaching and learning priorities on the achievement gap at Turnaround Schools, as well as all other schools in the district, in order to begin to see overall improvement in state assessment results.
- Evaluate programs for their effectiveness and ensure these programs and district resources are made available to the students and schools that need them.

- Reexamine the admissions process for magnet schools and specialized programs across the district to ensure equity and access for all students.
- Strengthen opportunities for interaction and articulation among schools and staff through vertical and horizontal communication and planning.
- Use the Standards Assessment Report developed at each school to focus teaching and learning efforts and reinforce the goals listed in the School Improvement Plans.

Finding

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational**, indicating that the Duval County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Teaching and Learning standard.

Documenting and Using Results

STANDARD: The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and system effectiveness.

Impact Statement: A school system is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly-defined performance measures. The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, identify gaps between expectations for student learning and student performance, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to system and school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, system and school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

Description

The district enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to develop strategies to improve student performance and system effectiveness. The district has a wealth of assessment data from standardized measures available to stakeholders, primarily through the system website. Data is interpreted and plans are made regarding implementation of instructional programs, professional development, scheduling, and remediation needs. Although the district has formative assessments, the QAR team did not find consistent proof that the assessments are being fully utilized at the classroom level to modify and adjust instruction to meet individual needs.

The district-developed Academic Interpretation and Data Evaluation (AIDE) software provides administrators access to disaggregated assessment data. Principals utilize this source to maintain data notebooks for their schools and share information with instructional staff as they deem appropriate. Interviews with stakeholders reveal that while this is useful, improvement is needed in making the application more user-friendly. End-of-Course (EOC) assessments in each of the major content areas are used for a variety of purposes such as determining final grades for secondary students and identifying professional development needs of teachers. The district student data system, Genesis, is used to maintain secure, accurate, and complete student records.

The district utilizes school climate and customer satisfaction surveys to determine the level of satisfaction with district services. This feedback is incorporated in planning district and school improvement needs.

Strengths

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Comprehensive student assessment data is available to schools for the purpose of school improvement planning.
- District website provides numerous links to district assessment data including graduation rate, dropout rate, attendance, mobility, and School Public Accountability Report (SPAR) making it easily accessible to stakeholders.
- Each school conducts a self-study and assessment that is guided by the Standards Assessment Report. This provides important information on organizational effectiveness as it relates to student performance.

Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Design and maintain a data warehousing system that is user friendly, directly applicable to instructional planning and easily accessible to administrators and instructional staff.
- Refine the implementation of formative assessments and provide training for instructional staff on using student assessment data regularly to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning for the benefit of improved student achievement.
- Continue plans to implement an electronic grade book that gives teachers and parents immediate access to individual student achievement.

Finding

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational**, indicating that the Duval County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Documenting and Using Results standard.

Resource and Support Systems

STANDARD: The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it 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 system employs and allocates staff well-qualified for their assignments. The system provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The system ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Description

Maintaining such a large district is a challenge and requires massive organization, skills, and knowledge. The district provides focus and direction for schools and educators through its strategic plan. Resources and support systems are aligned with the goals in the strategic plan. Duval County Schools has a wealth of resources and systems to support its schools and departments. Most notable is a very sophisticated professional development program. Facilities are maintained to promote the positive learning

atmosphere required for high levels of teaching and learning. Very highly developed facility development, maintenance, and upkeep procedures are evident in most of the district.

In professional development, there is a clearly defined induction program, leadership training, transitions for teachers program, individualized professional development plans, the Schultz Professional Development Partnership, various types of release and planning times during the day and year, district instructional coaches and monthly meetings with cluster chiefs, Standards Assessment Inventory to determine professional development, multiples options to access professional services including online availability. The Schultz Center provides strong training and support. The professional development plan is differentiated, comprehensive, and accessible. Staff members are able to grow by attending workshops, participating in professional learning communities and through formative observation. They gain skill through modeling, practice and feedback. However, there is little evidence of a focus of initiatives and programs that are directly related to retaining effective teachers in low performing schools.

Personnel allocation was strong in reference to instructional coaches at school and district levels. There exists an overall awareness of budget constraints that demonstrates the commitment of the system to weathering the financial crisis in the ways that still benefits children. The budget is aligned with the district goals, mission, vision, and plan. Allocation of funds towards specific needs is based on FCAT scores. There exist provisions for lower performing schools and higher level thinking programs.

In evidence is a plethora of support systems which include but are not limited to: Intervention programs, such as the High School Keystone Plan; STAR- Students Taking Academic Responsibility; the Compass Odyssey program; CSSS- Comprehensive Student Support System; The Full Service Program; ESL programs, ACE- Academic and Community Excellence Program, and identification and attention to turnaround schools.

Strengths

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Data is provided by the district that, in turn, drives professional development programs and considerations for funding allocations based on school needs, ultimately informing schools and teachers of student performance and academic needs.
- An in-depth comprehensive professional development program that is able to provide access for teachers to differentiated levels of professional development includes but is not exclusive of the following:
 - Teacher induction program
 - Instructional coaches
 - Support for Professional Learning Communities and dedicated time for these
 - Schultz Center- strong relationship and collaboration with the Center
 - Consideration for funding needs of the turnaround schools
 - Support for school based initiatives

Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Address the perception of disparity in the quality of housekeeping and maintenance between and among schools.
- Develop and implement procedures to ensure that district support and available resources are targeted, allocated and aligned with needs.

- Create communication processes to make all segments of the community aware of available resources plus the support and methods for accessing these resources.

Finding

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational**, indicating that the Duval County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Resource and Support Systems standard.

Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

STANDARD: The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. System and school personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.

Description

Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) as an institution has taken on the challenge of stakeholder communications and relationships with serious determination. The system recognizes that community involvement and engagement can only be accomplished through effective and widespread communication. The district has demonstrated a commitment in modernizing its communications system internally and externally.

The district effectively uses resources to keep the community informed. Manuals such as the Strategic Plan and the Magnet Handbook are placed on the website for internal and external stakeholders to peruse. DCPS News and DCPS Spotlight on Education, to name a few, are placed on the district website to enhance public awareness of upcoming activities, events and initiatives. Public meetings are also held to present district proposals and solicit community feedback such as Quadrant Area meetings under the auspices of the Academic and Community Excellence (ACE) planning/program. A communications survey was sent to principals to gather their feedback to improve the Communications Department’s effectiveness as part of a larger, comprehensive plan to more efficiently disseminate information to the community-at-large. In addition, a web-based survey solicited 934 responses from various stakeholders for their perceptions about stakeholder communication and relationships. While the dissemination of information from the district and schools is tremendously effective among most segments of stakeholders, there exist segments of the community who are unable to access important information concerning the schools and district.

Strengths

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- All stakeholder groups were represented on standard teams and were involved in the district’s self-assessment. This provided an avenue for input, captured their perceptions and increased awareness of the district accreditation process.
- Several forms of media are used to disseminate relevant information, initiatives, policies, etc.
- Public meetings designed to inform and seek input from the community are held on a variety of topics.

- Efforts are underway to modernize the communications system.

Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Increase efforts to develop and nurture system-wide strategies for two way communication with stakeholders.
- Solicit the knowledge and skills that stakeholders possess and use it to enhance the work of the system and address conditions impacting effectiveness.
- Institute procedures to enable teachers from different schools, departments and grade levels to plan together, share practices and learn from each other.
- Analyze data to offer a more robust picture of where improvement in communication needs to occur: Follow up on web-based Zoomerang data to identify which group of stakeholders needs improved communication from the district.
- Initiate a more strategic use of media to address the digital divide (i.e. radio).
- Design and employ systematic methods for communicating with “hard to reach” stakeholders to ensure the equitable delivery of information and participation of all stakeholders within the diverse community.

Finding

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational**, indicating that the Duval County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Stakeholder Communications and Relationships standard.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

STANDARD: The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the system with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the system and its schools demonstrate progress in improving student performance. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through analysis of student performance, system effectiveness, and assessment of the improvement process.

Description

A comprehensive and aligned strategic plan provides the foundation for continuous improvement. This five year plan was developed by a task force with representation from key stakeholders. The vision of the district appears to be clear to all stakeholder groups and is woven into the school improvement plans and standards assessment reports. Stakeholders demonstrate commitment toward achieving the vision. Students are even able to articulate the vision in their own words, especially at the middle and high school levels. The system also maintains a current profile. Results may be the stage of the process requiring the greatest attention. There is little evidence that the district closes the feedback loop and uses results information to determine progress toward goals and necessary course adjustments. Coupled with the strong foundation of the vision and alignment of planning processes, the DCPS also employs strong instructional leaders at the district and school levels. Evidence indicates that exemplary leadership

permeates the system through the use of processes such as the Principal Professional Learning Communities (PPLCs), cluster meetings, and coaching models.

While DCPS collects a wealth of data on student demographics and achievement data as well as program and perception data, these data are retrieved by and stored in different electronic databases. Some of these systems (e.g., AIDE) are robust, but principals and teachers report them to be cumbersome to use. Principals and teachers also report that one system for demographic data (Genesis) does not interface with other achievement data systems, such as AIDE. As a result, the district and schools have resorted to the use of hardcopy data notebooks. Some teachers report extensive personal use of their data notebooks with data drilling all the way down to individual student profiles. The use of data to inform instruction and guide intervention is highly variable, school to school and teacher to teacher. This seems almost entirely upon principal and teacher initiative. School staffs and district personnel referred repeatedly to the district formative and summative common assessments, which are still in the infancy stage and not part of a clearly defined systematic and systemic process. Some elementary teachers, instructional coaches and principals did report the extensive use of formative progress monitoring measures (such as DIBELS and DRA) to provide information about individual students, along with aggregate class and grade level performance. There are structures, processes and people in place that hold the potential to support the use of data toward continuous improvement (i.e. PPLCs, PLC early release time, instructional coaching cycles), but these efforts must become more systematized.

DCPS exhibits a strong commitment to allowing time for professional learning communities across the district to plan and collaborate. From the PLC early dismissal days to professional development days to common planning time, teachers and principals indicate having adequate time to drive continuous improvement efforts. Additionally, DCPS provides significant forums for teachers and principals to plan and collaborate with district leaders.

While the degree of stakeholder participation and engagement is variable school to school, there seems to be a strong commitment across the district to involve parents, business and community partners in planning and decision-making. Some schools are highly effective at engaging stakeholders, evidenced by their turnout for the on-site interviews during the accreditation review. While DCPS has initiated new efforts to engage business and community stakeholders (i.e. the creation Community Engagement Department, ACE Meetings, and assignment of business and faith-based partnerships to turnaround schools), these efforts are still largely in the early stages.

DCPS demonstrates a strong commitment by providing directives to schools and in their support to schools. Documentation provides evidence of a strong emphasis toward continuous improvement. School improvement plans must include goals and strategies for closing achievement gaps. While DCPS was required to create a Standards Assessment Report for the accreditation review, they took the next step to require all schools to create their own Standards Assessment Reports, further aligning continuous improvements efforts at all levels of the system. This effort exhibits the district's endeavors to develop more systematic and systemic processes. While planning and implementation seem to be strong indicators in the continuous improvement process, monitoring and evaluation of efforts are largely emerging.

Strengths

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The district ensures that each school plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning.
- The district allocates and protects time for professional learning communities to plan and engage in continuous improvement efforts across the system.
- There is a pervasive commitment to engaging multiple stakeholder groups in the processes of continuous improvement.
- The district exhibits a willingness to be transparent of system's challenges and strengths and openly discusses ideas for improvement efforts.
- The district provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts.
- The district partners with the Schultz Center to provide rich professional growth opportunities for personnel at all levels of the system.

Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Explore processes and procedures for stakeholder access to real-time data to inform decision making especially regarding instruction.
- Evaluate the program review process in order to most effectively determine and document the effectiveness of available and required programs.
- Identify venues in order to communicate the results of improvement efforts to multiple stakeholder groups.
- Identify and implement strategies to ensure multiple stakeholder groups are included and engaged in strategic decision making especially parents and business partners.
- Develop and implement a process to cultivate best practices for continuous improvement efforts within the system.

Finding

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational**, indicating that the Duval County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Commitment to Continuous Improvement standard.

Quality Assurance Findings

The Quality Assurance Review Team examined the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance. The team reviewed the district's practices and methods to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results. The team provides the following findings in this area.

Description

The Duval County Public Schools has embraced the concept of internal quality assurance and has instituted practices that demonstrate this important element of system leadership is valued. A number of diverse and effective methods for assuring quality were noted throughout the data collection process. These include, but are not limited to; the monitoring of school improvement plans, performance evaluations, regular visits to schools, frequent observations of classrooms, school self studies using the AdvancED quality standards, regular meetings (from the executive to school level) to examine and use data to guide decisions and actions, evaluation of professional development, holding vendors accountable for the quality of their programs and evaluation of services whether provided by staff or outsourced. It was also noted that principals rate central office staff for their effectiveness and efficiency twice each year.

Strengths

1. Duval schools have implemented a systemic process to develop, implement and monitor school improvement plans. Plans are reviewed by cluster chiefs, ratified by School Advisory Councils, and approved by the board. They are routinely monitored to ensure alignment with the district vision, impact on learning and fidelity of implementation. A variety of assessment and evaluation methods are used to gather data and document the efficacy of these plans. In addition, each department identifies goals and interventions that support the district's beliefs. These are evaluated annually and support a systemic approach to continuous improvement.
2. School site and classroom visits are regularly conducted by cluster chiefs and district staff to ensure alignment of school efforts with system direction. Observations and performance data are used to determine allocation of human and material resources. Principals conduct numerous classroom visits in which data are collected and documented. They are expected to conduct drop-ins, walk-throughs, observations and evaluations.
3. Each school is required to produce a Standard Assessment Report. This provides district staff with valuable data and allows schools to identify and demonstrate what they do to meet each of the standards. Many schools replicated the process used at the district level which was designed to engage a wide range of stakeholders.

Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement

1. Determine and communicate how the information acquired from the school Standard Assessment Reports can best be compiled, organized and used to identify strengths and needs and to plan for purposeful support and assistance. The significance of data from these reports has tremendous potential.

2. Consider how to systematically respond to the data collected from monitoring implementation of School Improvement Plans. This will help target needs, allocate resources and match programs and initiatives to both individual and collectives of schools with similar needs.
3. While a wealth of practices emerged that demonstrated quality assurance, ensure that these practices are being implemented with quality and integrity throughout the system.
4. The opportunity to provide schools and departments with meaningful feedback and support is strengthened by the quality and amount of data the quality assurance methods generate. It is important that the potential from using what you learn from these practices is realized through its application in terms of support to help foster continuous improvement.

Conclusion

The commendations and recommendations in this report are designed to focus the school district on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student performance and system effectiveness. While powerful in potential, the commendations and recommendations only have meaning when acted upon by the school district and its schools. The strength of this report lies in the school district's commitment to using the findings to continuously improve. The key is action. The school district is encouraged to use the report as a call to action, a tool to sustain momentum in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The team identified several recommendations for improvement that the school district will need to address. Two years following this review, the school district will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's recommendations.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to Ed Pratt-Dannals and Dr. Alvin White, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for hosting the review team. The team wishes the school and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS CASI accreditation with AdvancED.

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

Dr. Nikki Armato, Team Chair (Maryland)

Nikki Armato currently serves as the Chief Learning Officer for AdvancED and is responsible for leading the Professional Services division of the organization. Prior to working for AdvancED and SACS CASI, Nikki was the lead consultant for Armato Consulting, a business she created and developed. In this position, she worked with a wide variety of clients in the areas of continuous improvement, professional development, leadership and organizational behavior. Nikki has served as national presenter, consultant and trainer. She also has experience as a classroom teacher, consultant for gifted and talented, university instructor, professional development coordinator, and teaching and learning specialist. Dr. Armato has chaired numerous District Accreditation teams.

Dr. Deborah Rodgers, Vice Chair (Florida)

Dr. Rodgers presently serves as the Administrator for the Office of School Improvement and Accountability in Hillsborough County Public Schools, Tampa, Florida. Over the course of her 18 years as a teacher, she taught grades K-12. For 12 years she has served as an assistant principal in a middle school and a high school and as principal in two middle schools. Debbie has also served as a judge for the Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools Program.

Dr. Wade Davis, Vice Chair (Florida)

For the past seven years, Dr. Davis has served as a Research and Evaluation Specialist facilitating School Improvement and School Advisory Councils for the Osceola School District. He is a member of the State Advisory Committee on School Improvement. Wade served as Coordinator for the first District Accreditation visit to Osceola County. He taught social studies at the high school level for eight years and was the Academic Dean for Florida Metropolitan University. Wade also has experience as a military flight instructor and industry trainer. Dr. Davis has served on AdvancED Quality Assurance Teams to school districts in Georgia and Florida.

Dr. Alberto Rodriguez (Florida)

Dr. Rodriguez opened and is currently the principal of Westland Hialeah High School in Hialeah, Florida. His experiences include social studies teacher, assistant principal, middle and high schools principal and adjunct professor. Alberto has also served as an assistant, associate, and regional superintendent. He has received recognition and awards for his work and leadership. Dr Rodriguez has been a member of the Florida, State Council for SACS CASI and is a certified AdvancED quality assurance review chair for school accreditation.

Alvera J. Lesane (North Carolina)

Alvera is currently the Senior Director of Professional Growth and Development for the Durham Public Schools in North Carolina. Her previous professional experiences include serving as a high school social studies teacher, high school assistant principal, middle school principal, director of staff development and chief quality assurance officer. Alvera has served on a number of district accreditation teams.

Becky Densmore-Stoll (Illinois)

Becky currently works for AdvancED and serves as the Illinois Associate State Director. Her previous experiences include serving as: Senior Consultant – Organizational Development Analyst; Training and Organizational Development Manager for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines; and Executive Director for East Central Illinois Workforce Development Commission, Inc.

Dr. Carmen Marinelli (Florida)

Carmen serves as the Assistant Superintendent, Leadership Development for the Miami-Dade School District. Her previous professional experiences include high school and middle school language arts, yearbook, newspaper and drama teacher, department chairperson for English, assistant principal, middle school principal, high school principal, Regional Director, and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Support.

Carol DeMarinis (Florida)

Carol is Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction at Tampa Catholic High School which is a co-ed of 750 students. Her previous professional experiences include Early Childhood Development Coordinator, Elementary Teacher, High School Theology Teacher, and Interim Principal of a Pre-K to 8th Grade Catholic School.

Charleen A. V. Burke Thompson (Georgia)

Charleen currently is a school guidance counselor at Diamond Elementary School located in Fort Stewart, Georgia. Diamond Elementary School is a Department of Defense Educational Activity School and all students that attend have parents who are active army military. Some of her prior experiences include guidance counselor, assistant administrator, and teacher at elementary middle and high school. Charleen has also served as an assessor for the National Board of Professional Teacher Standards and is the Founder of the Georgia Education Project.

Cindy Saxon, (Georgia)

Cindy serves as the Director of School Improvement for the Carroll County Schools in Carrollton, Georgia. She has worked at the central office level as a liaison between the Human Resources and Curriculum and Instruction departments with responsibilities in both for the past 8 years. Cindy taught elementary school for 15 years. She has been an assistant principal and a principal and has worked with curriculum alignment, planned and led professional learning, and coached principals and assistant principals.

Dr. Consuelo V. Dominguez, (Florida)

Dr. Dominguez is the Administrative Director of School Operations for the Miami-Dade Public Schools in Miami, FL. Her previous experiences include high school and middle school principal, assistant principal and teacher. Consuelo was also a Dropout Prevention Coordinator and head of a Foreign Language Department.

Denny Chandler, (Kentucky)

Denny currently serves as a Professional Development Specialist for Measured Progress. Prior to serving in this role, he worked for Measured Progress as a Curriculum and Assessment specialist and Chief Reader for statewide assessments.

Denny has also served as a Remote Site Scoring Manager and Alternate Site Manager. He has been an adjunct instructor at Northern Kentucky University, and secondary social studies teacher and department chair.

Dinah Robinson (Louisiana)

Dinah is currently the principal at Washington Marion Magnet High School in Lake Charles. She previously served as an elementary principal and middle school principal and assistant principal. Dinah has been a high school English and computer science teacher. She currently serves on her Parish's District Accreditation Committee.

Dr. Earleen Smiley (Florida)

Dr. Smiley has served as the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction/Student Support Services for Broward Public Schools, for the past eight years. In this capacity she assists in the oversight of approximately 278 schools, their budgets, staff and students who come from diverse environments. Under her leadership, she has led the implementation of the District's vision, which is to close the gap between how students live and how they learn in school. Dr. Smiley's tenure in education includes serving as a high school language arts and speech and drama teacher. She has served as middle and high school assistant principal and high school principal. Earleen was also a curriculum specialist (North Carolina); a TRIO Talent Search Director (Sioux City, Iowa); and as an adjunct professor at Nova Southeastern University.

Dr. Eveleen Lorton (Florida)

Eveleen is currently a Professor of Education at the University of Miami, in Coral Gables, Florida. She teaches classes and directs The Writing Institute of the University of Miami and Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Some of her previous experiences include; secondary English teacher, secondary music teacher, secondary counselor, and counselor at St. Petersburg Community College. Eveleen has worked for the Department of Education on the state evaluation of teachers, state certification exam, merit pay for teachers and training for clinical educators. She is an active member and leader of the Florida State Council.

Fiona Hinds (Michigan)

Fiona currently works for AdvancED as the Associate Director in Michigan. Her previous experiences include 9-12 & K-12 principal, 9-12 assistant principal, high school English teacher, and English/Language Arts Curriculum Leader. She is a founding member of Charter School - Detroit School of Industrial Arts.

George Gaffney (Florida)

George serves as Area Director of Area III District Schools in the School District of Hillsborough County. George taught junior high at several schools prior to being appointed Assistant Principal for Student Affairs, followed by Management and Curriculum. He became a high school principal and served in that capacity until his current appointment. George has been an educator in Hillsborough for his entire career.

Dr. George Koonce (Florida)

George is retired from the Miami-Dade County Schools. During his professional career, he served as the Associate Superintendent, for School Operations in Miami-Dade. He currently serves as a consultant for AdvancED and is Past-President of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Dr. Hartzel Jennings (Florida)

Dr. Jennings is a retired school administrator, Brevard County Public Schools, Florida and Field Consultant for AdvancED and CITA. Some of his previous professional experiences include community school coordinator, assistant principal, elementary school principal, middle school principal, high school principal, director in media and textbook selection, educational television producer - Focus on Education, Chairman Community Development - Miami Dade Community College, adjunct professor Nova University, Director of Research and Development for Dukane's media retrieval systems. Hartzel is a national presenter of the use of technology in the classroom.

Jim Eck, (Colorado)

Mr. James Eck is Senior Director for the Leadership Workgroup in Field Services at McREL. He supervises and coordinates the design, development, and service delivery of McREL's *Balanced Leadership: School District Leadership that Works* professional development and technical assistance. Mr. Eck's consulting responsibilities for McREL also include the *Balanced Leadership: School Leadership that Works* program. His primary areas of expertise are in educational leadership, curriculum and assessment, and the organizational change process. Prior to his work with McREL, Mr. Eck was the assessment coordinator for Reading First with the Colorado Department of Education. He has been an interim superintendent, assistant superintendent, middle school principal and assistant principal, and teacher with more than 25 years of educational experience. Jim has also provided consulting services and presentations across the country on assessment and in the analysis of data to inform instruction.

Dr. James May (Texas)

James C. May currently is a Field Consultant for Texas SACS CASI and Campus Administrator Mentor for the Texas School Improvement Resource Center through ESC XIII and the Texas Education Agency. He recently retired after serving nine years as principal of Kempner High School in Fort Bend ISD. Prior to that, he was principal of Dulles Middle School for three and a half years in Fort Bend ISD. Jim has also been an adjunct professor with The University of Houston and has served for six years on the Board of Directors for the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals and for three years as Regional Coordinator for ESC IV, the largest contingent in the state.

Jonathan Drew More (Louisiana)

Drew currently serves as the Louisiana State Council chair and has been appointed to the National Accreditation Council. He retired from public education on June 30, 2008, after serving for eight years as principal of a university laboratory school. Prior to becoming principal, Drew worked extensively in teacher training in the lab school setting. He has taught public school students in the areas of music, theatre and drama, technology, reading, and science. While supervising student teachers and teachers in training, he taught university courses in technology. He has extensive experience in audio, video, radio, television, and integration of these into the classroom and school system. He has served on many SACS and SACS CASI committees, serving as chair on most within the last ten years.

Kirk Hartom, (New Mexico)

Kirk currently serves as the Assistant Superintendent for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe Catholic Schools. Previous to this, he was the Founder and Administrator for *Nuestros Valores Charter School*, a small school for at-risk learners in Albuquerque, New Mexico's South Valley. Kirk has also been a language arts, speech, and drama teacher and has taught and coached at the high

school and junior high school level. He currently serves on the New Mexico Secretary of Education's Commission for Assessment and Accountability. He has served on the New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools Board and currently serves as a Board member for the New Mexico Association for Non-Public Schools. He was a member of the AdvancED Team that accredited the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Indiana Catholic Schools in February 2008.

Larry Marksberry, (Florida)

Larry is a retired Lt. Colonel for the USA. He currently serves as Senior Army Instructor and lead teacher for the Army JROTC Academy, Forest Hill High School, West Palm Beach, FL. Previous experiences include director of a career academy for underserved youth in Miami; parochial school principal (pre-K through middle school) in Ft. Lauderdale; Assistant Professor of Military Science at Virginia Tech, and, experience as SACS steering committee chair, School Advisory Council Chair, SACS CASI facilitator, and AdvancED Quality Assurance Review team chair/member for several school districts and public and private schools.

Dr. Linda Bedell, Florida)

Linda is retired from the Broward County school district, but continues to work as a consultant for educational leaders and schools. Her previous professional experiences include District Area Director for Preschool through adult education, principal of a large urban elementary school, and elementary school teacher.

Dr. Randall Felton, (Florida)

Randy is currently retired. He actively served in the US Navy and Navy Reserve from 1968 – 2007. His educational experiences are primarily in the area of social studies. He has been a high school social studies teacher, a social studies consultant for the Florida, Department of Education, president of the Florida Council of social studies and a graduate assistant at Florida State University. Randy served as the curriculum coordinator for the school district of Leon County and was the Founding principal for John Paul Catholic School in Tallahassee, FL.

Sammy Lee Felton, (Alabama)

Sammy recently began serving as an Assistant Professor of Education Leadership, Tift College of Education at Mercer University. He has prior administrative and leadership experience as a superintendent, interim superintendent, and deputy superintendent in addition to serving as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Sammy has also been a high school principal, middle school principal and English teacher.

Susan C. Gandy, (Alabama)

Susan serves as a kindergarten teacher at the Lewis Adams Early Childhood Center in Tuskegee, AL. She has been associated with SACS CASI for over 20 years and is a certified school level quality assurance review chairperson for AdvancED. Susan has chaired K-12 school visits across the state of Alabama. She taught K-5 in the public and private sector.

Teresa Wright, (Florida)

Teresa currently serves as director, Office of Early Childhood & Title I Programs for Brevard Public Schools. Her prior professional experiences include elementary principal, assistant principal, and teacher. She served on the QAR team for Camden County Schools, Georgia in April, 2008.

Dr. Tony Thurman, (Arkansas)

Tony currently serves as the Superintendent of the Cabot School District in Cabot, Arkansas, which serves 10,000 students. Tony has spent nine years as a high school, middle school and elementary principal after teaching for five years.

Victor Frias, (Florida)

Victor presently serves as assistant principal of Boyd Anderson High School, in Broward County, Florida. He has previous experience as an Assistant Principal Pupil Personnel Services New York City Public School System, Assistant Principal World Languages and Social Studies Departments, Grade Advisor, History Teacher, and ESE and ESOL Instructor.

Wynne Tye, (Florida)

Mrs. Tye was appointed Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for Hillsborough County schools on July 1, 2008, and is currently serving in this capacity. Some of her prior experiences include General Director for Exceptional Student Education and General Director of Middle School Education. Wynne has served as an administrative resource teacher, middle school assistant principal and principal. She began her teaching career as a teacher for the Mentally Handicapped at Manhattan and Caminiti Exceptional Centers and served as assistant principal at the Center.

AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems

The **AdvancED** Standards for Quality School Systems are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. As school districts reach higher levels of implementation of the standards, they will have a greater capacity to support ever-increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. Each of the seven standards listed below has corresponding indicators and impact statements which can be accessed at www.advanc-ed.org.

Vision and Purpose

The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system.

Governance and Leadership

The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.

Teaching and Learning

The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Documenting and Using Results

The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and system effectiveness.

Resource and Support Systems

The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.