

# Report of the External Review Team for The Charter Schools of Excellence

1225 SE 2nd Ave  
Fort Lauderdale  
FL 33316-1807  
US

**Mr. Robert Haag  
Superintendent**

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# Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Use of Diagnostic Tools

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

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

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

## Index of Education Quality

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

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

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

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

## Benchmark Data

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

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

## Powerful Practices

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

## Opportunities for Improvement

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

## Improvement Priorities

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

## The Review

The External Review occurred May 3-6, 2015. Prior to the onsite review the External Review Team analyzed the district Accreditation Report and began to identify potential themes from the Standards and Indicators. Challenges and areas for improvement identified by the district were reviewed. Team members conducted a preliminary individual rating of all 41 Indicators, and the External Review Team identified potential themes related to the domains of Teaching and Learning Impact, Leadership Capacity, and Resource Utilization.

In lieu of an online team conference two separate process overview documents were electronically distributed to team members. The first highlighted group norms and expectations, Conflict of Interest and Ethics policies and expectations, and logistical issues related to the External Review. The second document summarized highlighted strengths and needs of the district as identified in district reports and documents.

The Lead Evaluator was in regular communication with the Deputy Superintendent prior to the External Review. This resulted in a useful review schedule and an overall smooth review process.

The External Review Team was composed of five team members; however, one team member had to withdraw just days before the onsite review. No replacement was located necessitating a four-person team.

The four-person External Review Team conducted an organizational meeting on May 3, 2015. The district Accreditation Report was reviewed and the External Review Team developed potential themes under the three domains of:

- 1) Teaching and Learning Impact
- 2) Leadership Capacity
- 3) Resource Utilization

District supporting evidence was provided the first day of the review to the External Review Team on thumb drives. The evidence was organized by Standards and Indicators and was easily matched with the respective Indicators.

For each domain potential Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities were highlighted. Key interview questions were developed and reviewed.

The External Review Team (Team) spent the next day (Day One; May 4, 2015) in the district central office receiving leadership team presentations and interviewing central office staff, parents, and board members. The Team met for several hours in the evening to review the presentations, interviews and evidence. All of the Indicators were reviewed and rated. Potential Opportunities for Improvement and Improvement Priorities were reviewed and revised. Questions and "look-fors" in the upcoming school reviews were identified.

On Day Two (May 5, 2015)) the Team conducted extensive classroom observations in all four of the district schools and interviewed principals, instructional staffs, and some students. Two Team members were assigned to each school campus. The Team spent the evening work session conducting eleot™ data reviews and Indicator ratings. Two Powerful Practice statements, two Opportunity for Improvement statements, and three Improvement Priority statements were developed.

The final day (Day Three; May 6, 2015) consisted of reviewing eleot™ data, reviewing Indicator average ratings and comparing them with AdvancED Network average ratings, and then finalizing the various action statements. The remainder of the morning involved report writing and oral exit report preparation. The oral exit report was presented to board members and the leadership staff.

The External Review Team extends its gratitude to The Charter Schools of Excellence leadership staff for their hospitality and receptivity to the Review process. They completed the school level and district Self Assessment reports with attention to the ratings for each Indicator. The school instructional staffs and support staffs were all knowledgeable and prepared for the Review. The External Review Team was well-received in all classrooms and the related interviews were candid, transparent and informative.

The Accreditation Report was submitted in a timely manner and served as the basis for the External Review. Leadership staff presentations were informative. Any and all information requested by the External Review Team was made available. The district leadership clearly communicated its commitment to continuous improvement through its preparation for the Review and indicated that it plans to move forward in addressing



the Improvement Priorities.

Stakeholders were interviewed by members of the External Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's effectiveness and student performance. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the External Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Superintendents	1
Board Members	6
Administrators	5
Instructional Staff	17
Students	21
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>

# Results

## Teaching and Learning Impact

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	2.25	2.69
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	2.00	2.55
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.25	2.54
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.50	2.70
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	1.75	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.00	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.00	2.67

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.00	2.97
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	3.00	2.46
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	3.00	2.57
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.25	2.60
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	2.00	2.63

### Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	2.00	2.67
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	1.75	2.48
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	1.50	2.14
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	2.25	2.45
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	2.75	2.85

### Student Performance Diagnostic

The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of

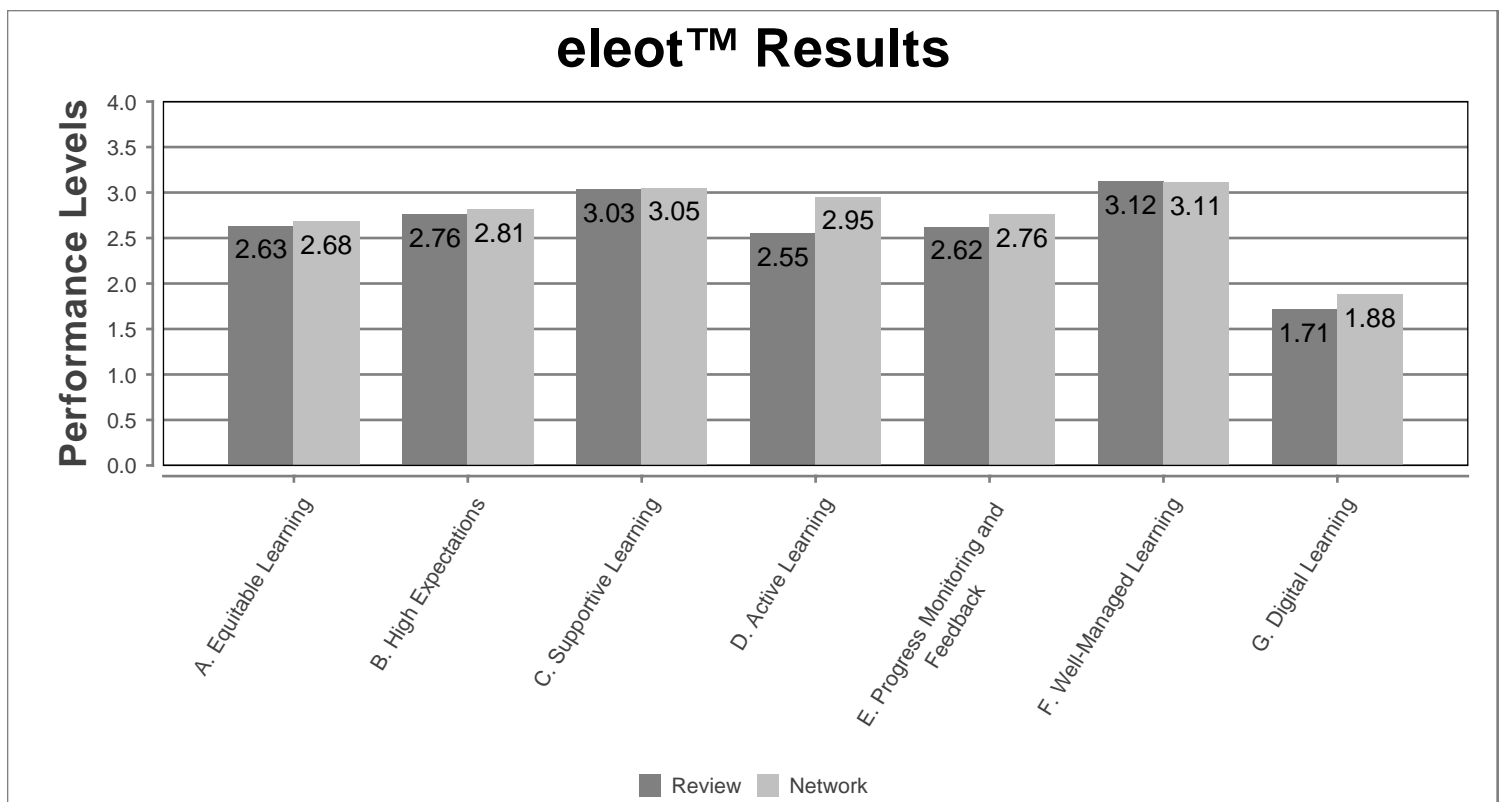
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	2.25	3.32
Test Administration	2.25	3.62
Equity of Learning	2.50	2.52
Quality of Learning	2.25	3.06

## Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

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



The External Review Team conducted 40 classroom observations using the eleot™. The classroom learning environments are ranked below from highest to lowest. The Charter Schools of Excellence (CSE) average scores are presented first and the AdvancED Network (AEN) average scores are in parentheses.

-Well-Managed Learning Environment: 3.12(3.11)

-Supportive Learning Environment: 3.03 (3.05)

- High Expectations Environment: 2.76 (2.81)
- Equitable Learning Environment: 2.63 (2.68)
- Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment: 2.62 (2.76)
- Active Learning Environment: 2.55 (2.95)
- Digital Learning Environment: 1.71 (1.88)

Five of the seven learning environment ratings were essentially at the respective AdvancED Network (AEN) averages. Two were slightly below the AEN averages.

While eleot™ observation data reveal differences in the classroom learning environments across the district, the data also reveal a high degree of consistency with regard to some components. The eleot™ rating scale ranges from a low of "1" (Not Observed) to a high of "4" (Very Evident). The numerical values for the various learning environments provide a relative ranking of learning opportunities available for students; therefore, lower rating scores indicate this item was less observed than items with higher numerical ratings. The lower rated items are also those considered to be worthy of further examination by school and district officials in terms of enhancing classroom learning environments and instructional strategies.

#### Well-Managed Learning Environment

The Well-Managed Learning Environment area received the highest rating and was a relative strength of the district. The students "speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and peers (3.48)," and they were also observed to understand "classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences (3.45)." The relatively lowest rated item was "Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities (2.38)." Team members noted the lack of student-centered activities in many classrooms.

#### Supportive Learning Environment

The Supportive Learning Environment data suggest that many of the students are provided opportunities for teacher support and assistance. Students demonstrated positive attitudes about their classrooms (3.32) and expressed that learning experiences were positive (3.18). Students were also willing to take risks in learning (3.15) and they were provided assistance when needed (3.15).

However, opportunities for students to receive support in the form of being "provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback" were less evident (2.35).

#### High Expectations Learning Environment

The use of exemplars of high quality work (2.18) was not observed in many classrooms. Instances in which students were "asked and responds to questions that required higher ordering thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)," were not regularly observed (2.38) in many classrooms. Additionally, the perceived level of academic rigor in the observed classes was rated relatively low (2.72). These items correlate strongly with the Improvement Priorities related to the following Indicators:

-3.1: The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.

-3.2: Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.

-3.3: Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.

### Equitable Learning Environment

Classroom observations revealed that students were seldom provided "differentiated opportunities and activities to address individual needs (2.15)." This item is relatively lower than many of the items in this grouping with the exception of having "ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences (1.38)."

The extent to which students have "equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support (3.42)" suggests this component is very evident relative to other learning opportunities for students. All students had opportunities to ask questions and participate in discussions that occurred during direct instruction. Observers noted, however, that questions and discussion were often times limited to several students in the class.

Observations also revealed that students know that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied as this component was rated 3.58. Observers noted that students not following procedures or complying with teacher instructions very seldom resulted in a loss of instructional time.

### Progress Monitoring Learning Environment

There were several low rated items including: "Understands how her/his work is assessed (2.28)" and "Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback (2.38)." These observed items correlate strongly with the External Review Team Indicator ratings related to the lack of systematic data-use practices to inform instruction. Formative assessment practices were not widely used nor was summative data used systematically throughout the district. Progress monitoring is a practice that needs significant professional development as it is crucial to improved student achievement.

### Active Learning Environment

The Active Learning Environment lowest rated item was "Makes connections from content to real-life experiences (2.18)" suggesting the need to focus on connecting instruction to real-world application. Having opportunities for students to engage in discussions with their teacher or fellow students was also infrequently observed (2.25).

### Digital Learning Environment

This was the lowest rated (1.71) area. There was some observed use of "digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning (1.92)." The system laptop initiative was observed to be inconsistently implemented. In some classrooms students were actively using their laptops for learning. In other rooms it was observed that the laptops were being used more as substitute for paper and pencil activities. Very few digital collaborative activities were observed (1.42).



It is useful to keep in mind that this item measures student use of technology for learning. It does not assess the availability of technology in the classroom nor teacher use of technology.

The schools and classrooms were very well-managed. Students at all levels exhibited a clear awareness of rules and routines. The observation data suggests that many of the students are exposed to learning environments which are positive. Observers noted, however, the relative absence of high expectations in many classrooms as demonstrated through the complexity of questions, level of challenge, and opportunities for students to use critical thinking skills.

The eleot™ items most frequently observed included:

- Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied
- Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher
- Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks
- Is actively engaged in the learning activities
- Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content
- Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers

The eleot™ items least frequently observed included:

- Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs
- Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)
- Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs
- Makes connections from content to real-life experiences
- Understands how her/his work is assessed
- Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities
- Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning

The lower rated environment descriptor items suggest that the system should focus on increasing student-centered instruction and group learning activities. Other areas of continuous improvement that could benefit from a targeted focus involve the use of exemplars and providing more opportunities for students to receive support in the form of being "provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback." Taken together the district is encouraged to examine the availability of differentiated instruction and individualization for many of its students.

**eleot™ Data Summary**

<b>A. Equitable Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	2.15	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	12.50%	25.00%	27.50%	35.00%
2.	3.42	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	47.50%	47.50%	5.00%	0.00%
3.	3.58	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	57.50%	42.50%	0.00%	0.00%
4.	1.38	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	2.50%	10.00%	10.00%	77.50%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.63</b>						

<b>B. High Expectations</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.38	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	47.50%	42.50%	10.00%	0.00%
2.	3.18	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	35.00%	47.50%	17.50%	0.00%
3.	2.18	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	12.50%	27.50%	25.00%	35.00%
4.	2.72	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	25.00%	32.50%	32.50%	10.00%
5.	2.38	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	15.00%	32.50%	27.50%	25.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.76</b>						

<b>C. Supportive Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.18	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	30.00%	57.50%	12.50%	0.00%
2.	3.32	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	37.50%	57.50%	5.00%	0.00%
3.	3.15	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	35.00%	50.00%	10.00%	5.00%
4.	3.15	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	37.50%	42.50%	17.50%	2.50%
5.	2.35	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	25.00%	17.50%	25.00%	32.50%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.03</b>						

<b>D. Active Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	2.25	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	12.50%	17.50%	52.50%	17.50%
2.	2.18	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	15.00%	25.00%	22.50%	37.50%
3.	3.22	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	40.00%	45.00%	12.50%	2.50%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.55</b>						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.42	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	12.50%	30.00%	45.00%	12.50%
2.	2.92	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	22.50%	47.50%	30.00%	0.00%
3.	3.10	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	25.00%	60.00%	15.00%	0.00%
4.	2.28	Understands how her/his work is assessed	15.00%	20.00%	42.50%	22.50%
5.	2.38	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	5.00%	45.00%	32.50%	17.50%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.62</b>						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.48	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	55.00%	37.50%	7.50%	0.00%
2.	3.40	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	50.00%	40.00%	10.00%	0.00%
3.	2.90	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	42.50%	27.50%	7.50%	22.50%
4.	2.38	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	25.00%	27.50%	7.50%	40.00%
5.	3.45	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	50.00%	45.00%	5.00%	0.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.12</b>						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	1.92	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	20.00%	10.00%	12.50%	57.50%
2.	1.78	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	15.00%	12.50%	7.50%	65.00%
3.	1.42	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	7.50%	7.50%	5.00%	80.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.71</b>						

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive assessment system that: 1) produces data from multiple assessment measures, 2) incorporates consistent measurement across all classrooms and courses, 3) provides a comprehensive picture of student learning, instruction, and the effectiveness of programs, 4) is used to monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and, 5) ensures vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum, instructional practices and assessment.

(Indicators 5.1, 5.2, 5.3)

### Evidence and Rationale

In the district’s Self Assessment Report Indicators 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 were rated at performance levels 2.0, 3.0, and 2.0 respectively. Interviews with teachers supported that analysis, interpretation, and use of multiple assessment data was inconsistent among the various schools and grade levels. There was no evidence of a consistent measurement system or process across all classrooms. Interviews with administrators and teachers confirmed the Self Assessment in that there was no comprehensive picture of how instruction was matched to individualized learning needs. Classroom observations using the eleot confirmed this need as well. Data analysis tended to be at the classroom level.

Data analysis is an important step in a systematic process. The data also must be used to target strategies specific and unique to each learner; thus, promoting a data-to-action culture within the schools in the system. Effective data interpretation will allow teachers to analyze their instructional practices in order to develop targeted strategies.

### Improvement Priority

Develop, implement, and evaluate instructional practices that: 1) clearly inform students of learning expectations and standards of performance, 2) require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills, 3) include examples (exemplars) of high quality work or performance, 4) use data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice to systematically monitor and adjust instruction, and, 5) incorporate formative assessment to directly modify instruction.

(Indicators 3.2, 3.6)

### Evidence and Rationale

In the Self Assessment report, Indicators 3.2 and 3.6 were rated at performance levels of 3.0 and 4.0; however, the External Review Team did not observe student learning opportunities that supported these rating levels. Classroom observations revealed that many students were neither aware of expectations for performance nor how their work was assessed. Instruction tended to be teacher-centric. Observations revealed relatively infrequent use of student-centered learning activities. Teacher questioning strategies tended to be information-seeking rather than requiring student use of higher order thinking skills. Interviews revealed little deliberate use of teacher collaboration focused on formative data use and assessment of instructional strategies.

Instructional practices that are focused on student learning needs will result in improved student performance and outcomes.

### **Improvement Priority**

Review, implement, and evaluate the curriculum in each grade/subject to ensure: 1) that all students are provided challenging opportunities to develop learning and thinking skills, 2) active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and application of knowledge and skills, 3) teachers throughout the district require student collaboration, self-reflection and development of critical thinking skills, and, 4) that all subjects in all grade levels have the same high learning expectations.

(Indicators 3.1, 3.3)

### Evidence and Rationale

Classroom walk-throughs showed little opportunity for students to work on challenging curriculum that addressed the needs of all students. By continually assessing, reflecting, and individualizing content to meet student needs, students will develop learning and thinking skills that will take them beyond the rigors of the Florida Standards. Students had very few opportunities to collaborate with other students or reflect upon their own learning. Student collaboration with peers will help prepare students to develop skills as highly collaborative citizens. Self-reflection allows students to better incorporate the skills and attitudes needed to motivate them to succeed.

The district schools have several technology tools such as Smart Boards and laptop computers. Some students were observed utilizing laptops for guided research practice or using a software program such as Success Maker, while other students were completing traditional worksheets. Smart Boards were more often observed to be used as a projector rather than an interactive teaching tool. Teachers may benefit from additional training in order to help students use technology as an instructional resource and learning tool.

Interviews with teachers and administrators revealed that grade-level teachers commonly collaborate on lesson planning within the school. Each team is small in number, however, which limits the scope of idea and knowledge sharing available. Reviews of lesson plans supported the need for individualized instruction, however, small group instruction typically focused on common textbook work with little evidence of individualization. The observed learning centers may be enhanced for students with more differentiation of activities and choice. Interviews supported the need for continued high-quality professional development in the use of differentiation and individualization.

Expanding the system's curriculum beyond textbook content will result in students being better prepared for success at the next level.

### **Opportunity for Improvement**

Develop, implement, and monitor the effectiveness of a collaborative learning process involving all instructional staff.

(Indicators 3.5)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

Interviews and onsite observations revealed that most teachers work in relative isolation from their peers. There was significant time provided before the school year starts for professional development and room preparation. There was also excellent supervision from the building principals. There was no evidence; however, of any structured collaborative communities or processes whereby teachers could help each other analyze student performance data and implement new instructional strategies.

The four school sites in the Charter Schools of Excellence vary widely in size. Smaller sites are sometimes more problematic for establishing collaborative learning communities in that there is only one teacher per grade level. It is possible to establish a process that involves multiple grade levels. It is also possible to develop a collaborative process involving several of the campuses with regular staff meetings to review student progress.

Regardless of structure, the process should involve productive discussion about student learning and the conditions that support student learning. Using and discussing the results of inquiry practices such as action research, the examination of student work, reflection, study teams, and peer coaching can become a part of the daily routine of all staff members.

Development of collaborative learning communities typically leads to improvement results in instructional practice, system effectiveness and student performance.

### **Powerful Practice**

The school system effectively engages families in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.

(Indicators 3.8)

*Evidence and Rationale*

Family engagement was observed to be a real strength of the system. Parents reported that the school keeps them informed of their child's progress through reports, phone calls and conferences. Individual needs are promptly addressed by staff. School leaders personally know each student in their school and are in frequent contact with family members. The strength of each schools' family engagement is evidenced through the strong performance rate of the students.



# Leadership Capacity

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

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

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

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

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

## Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	2.25	2.67
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	1.75	2.69
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	2.50	2.87
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	2.25	2.64

## Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	2.75	2.96
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.00	2.99
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	3.25	3.20
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	2.75	3.00
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	3.00	2.69

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	3.00	2.78

## Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

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

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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	3.50	3.43
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.50	3.12

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive assessment system that: 1) produces data from multiple assessment measures, 2) incorporates consistent measurement across all classrooms and courses, 3) provides a comprehensive picture of student learning, instruction, and the effectiveness of programs, 4) is used to monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and, 5) ensures vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum, instructional practices and assessment.

(Indicators 5.1, 5.2, 5.3)

### Evidence and Rationale

In the district's Self Assessment Report Indicators 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 were rated at performance levels 2.0, 3.0, and 2.0 respectively. Interviews with teachers supported that analysis, interpretation, and use of multiple assessment data was inconsistent among the various schools and grade levels. There was no evidence of a consistent measurement system or process across all classrooms. Interviews with administrators and teachers confirmed the Self Assessment in that there was no comprehensive picture of how instruction was matched to individualized learning needs. Classroom observations using the eleot confirmed this need as well. Data analysis tended to be at the classroom level.

Data analysis is an important step in a systematic process. The data also must be used to target strategies specific and unique to each learner; thus, promoting a data-to-action culture within the schools in the system. Effective data interpretation will allow teachers to analyze their instructional practices in order to develop targeted strategies.

### **Powerful Practice**

The board supports the system's mission, purpose, and direction, and functions as a cohesive unit for the benefit of effective system operation and student learning.

(Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)

### *Evidence and Rationale*

Interviews with board members and school system administrators revealed that the Board consistently ensures that school leadership has the autonomy to accomplish goals for achievement and instruction, and to manage day-to-day operation effectively. Policies are in place for monitoring and evaluating effective instruction and assessment processes. Board members are actively involved in the system's instructional initiatives such as staff development and technology acquisition and use. Their participation also includes conflict resolution, decision-making, supervision, and fiscal responsibilities.

This contribution results in positive practices that directly benefits the students, their families and the staff.

# Resource Utilization

The use and distribution of resources must be aligned and supportive of the needs of an institution and the students served. Institutions must ensure that resources are aligned with the stated mission and are distributed equitably so that the needs of students are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes an examination of the allocation and use of resources, the equity of resource distribution to need, the ability of the institution to ensure appropriate levels of funding and sustainability of resources, as well as evidence of long-range capital and resource planning effectiveness.

Institutions, regardless of their size, need access to sufficient resources and systems of support to be able to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts that result in a continuous improvement cycle. Indeed, a study conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L., 2003) "demonstrated a strong relationship between resources and student success... both the level of resources and their explicit allocation seem to affect educational outcomes."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in the more than 32,000 institutions in the AdvancED Network that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff members to improve their effectiveness and ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

## Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	3.25	2.98
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	3.25	2.98
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.50	3.05
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	3.00	2.67

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	2.75	2.82
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.50	2.64
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	3.00	2.65
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	3.00	2.64

## Findings

### Opportunity for Improvement

Develop a process to actively involve the principals from each school site as members of the district leadership team to ensure: 1) all leaders support innovation and collaboration, 2) shared leadership among all schools, 3) succession planning, and, 4) continuous improvement to achieve the system’s purpose, mission and vision. (Indicators 4.2)

#### Evidence and Rationale

Interviews revealed that the building principals were knowledgeable of their school and student needs. Because this is a school system it would benefit everyone if the school leadership staff had regular participation in planning with the system-level staff. The External Review Team noted that the various campuses each had their own strengths and needs as identified in their respective Self Assessment reports.

Collaboration using a shared leadership model would allow each campus an opportunity to learn from one another; thereby strengthening an already solid academic program across the entire system.

# Conclusion

The Charter Schools of Excellence was one of the first charter schools established in Florida. Over the years it has grown to four campuses and serves grade levels K-5. It enjoys the support of a very interested and active board. The school leadership is well-established and very facile at responding to community needs. The district's strength is based on relationships with its students and parents. The character education focus and commitment of the district to engaging families was evident throughout the Review. In summary, the district lives its core values of " honesty, respect, tolerance, fairness, self-discipline, integrity, responsibility citizenship, work ethic, and trust."

The identified Improvement Priorities and Opportunities for Improvement are related to teaching and learning. There is a need to focus on curriculum alignment and rigor, on effective instructional practices, and on developing and using a comprehensive data management and analysis system. Professional development activities need to be linked from assessment practices to instructional practices. All components need to be evaluated on a regular basis for effectiveness.

The CSE is constantly at the mercy of student enrollment fluctuations and sporadic competition from newly opened charter schools. Teacher training and supervision is an ongoing need in a very competitive market. The district has developed its own mentor teacher program and this helps to train and support new faculty members. One of the major challenges is in the areas of curriculum alignment, assessment and data use to both inform instruction and evaluate programs.

The identified Improvement Priorities are all related to developing systemic and systematic continuous improvement processes that will result in improved student achievement outcomes. The processes involve curriculum, instruction, and data use. The development of these processes can be time consuming; however, the district appears poised to take on the challenges inherent in the years ahead.

## Improvement Priorities

The institution should use the findings from this review to guide the continuous improvement process. The institution must address the Improvement Priorities listed below:

- Develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive assessment system that: 1) produces data from multiple assessment measures, 2) incorporates consistent measurement across all classrooms and courses, 3) provides a comprehensive picture of student learning, instruction, and the effectiveness of programs, 4) is used to monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and, 5) ensures vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum, instructional practices and assessment.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate instructional practices that: 1) clearly inform students of learning expectations and standards of performance, 2) require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills, 3) include examples (exemplars) of high quality work or performance, 4) use data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice to systematically monitor and adjust instruction, and, 5) incorporate formative

assessment to directly modify instruction.

- Review, implement, and evaluate the curriculum in each grade/subject to ensure: 1) that all students are provided challenging opportunities to develop learning and thinking skills, 2) active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and application of knowledge and skills, 3) teachers throughout the district require student collaboration, self-reflection and development of critical thinking skills, and, 4) that all subjects in all grade levels have the same high learning expectations.



# Accreditation Recommendation

## Index of Education Quality

The Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) provides a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of indicators and evaluative criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus.

The IEQ™ comprises three domains: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; and 3) the use of resources and data to support and optimize learning.

The overall and domain scores can range from 100-400. The domain scores are derived from: the AdvancED Standards and indicators ratings; results of the Analysis of Student Performance; and data from Stakeholder Feedback Surveys (students, parents, and staff).

	External Review IEQ Score	AdvancED Network Average
Overall Score	256.71	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	226.19	274.14
Leadership Capacity	279.17	296.08
Resource Utilization	303.12	286.32

The IEQ™ results include information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria as well as to other institutions in the AdvancED Network. The institution should use the information in this report, including the corresponding performance rubrics, to identify specific areas of improvement.

Consequently, the External Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the institution earn the distinction of accreditation for a five-year term. AdvancED will review the results of the External Review to make a final determination including the appropriate next steps for the institution in response to these findings.

# Addenda

## Individual Institution Results (Self-reported)

Institution Name	Teaching and Learning Impact	Leadership Capacity	Resource Utilization	Overall IEQ Score
The Charter School of Excellence - Tamarac 1 Campus	271.43	363.64	271.43	297.44
The Charter School of Excellence - Tamarac 2 Campus	271.43	363.64	257.14	294.87
The Charter Schools of Excellence - Davie Campus	357.14	345.45	357.14	353.85
The Charter Schools of Excellence - Fort Lauderdale 2 Campus	276.19	363.64	257.14	297.44
The Charter Schools of Excellence - Riverland 2 Campus	333.33	300.00	314.29	320.51
The Charter Schools of Excellence - Riverland Campus	338.10	300.00	314.29	323.08
The Charter Schools of Excellence Fort Lauderdale 1	300.00	318.18	257.14	297.44
The Charter Schools of Excellence-Davie 2 Campus	361.90	327.27	357.14	351.28

# Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Dr. George W Griffin</p>	<p>Dr. Griffin holds B.A. and M.Ed.degrees from Duke University. He received his Ph.D.in Special Education from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Primary areas of concentration included the education of students with learning disabilities and/or behavior problems, and educational administration. During his 40-year education career Griffin has been a special education teacher, high school principal, central office program director, state department program director, and university professor. He has extensive experience in alternative school programming; having served as a school director and statewide program director for services for violent and assaultive youth in North Carolina. Griffin has served as the Department Chair in the Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology at North Carolina Central University. He has also served as a Special Education Due Process Hearing Officer in North Carolina. Griffin is the author of several entries in the Encyclopedia of Educational Leadership and Administration as well as a contributor to several special education textbooks and professional journals.</p> <p>Dr. Griffin is an independent educational consultant (<a href="http://learnerdifferences.com">learnerdifferences.com</a>). He serves as a Lead Evaluator with AdvancED and has lead reviews in numerous schools and school districts throughout the United States and in the Middle East. He was the keynote speaker and a session presenter at the first AdvancED International Learning Disabilities Conference (May, 2013) in Beirut, Lebanon. He has also presented interactive training sessions at AdvancED Global Education Conferences in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt.</p>
<p>Dianna Weinbaum</p>	<p>Dianna Weinbaum holds a Master of Educational Leadership and a Bachelor of Elementary Education in ESOL and K-6 from Florida Atlantic University. Ms. Weinbaum also holds an Associate of Arts in Fashion Merchandising from Bay Path College in Longmeadow, Massachusetts. She currently works as a Specialist of School Improvement and District Accreditation for the School District of Palm Beach County in West Palm Beach, Florida. Ms. Weinbaum spearheaded the 18-month process of preparing the District's 173 accredited schools for their System Accreditation External Review visit which was held in January, 2013. She also prepares schools and leadership for an annual internal accreditation review process. Ms. Weinbaum designs and implements staff development for teachers and administrators on school improvement initiatives, disseminates research about school reform, and works with School Advisory Councils on the development of School Improvement Plans. Currently, Ms. Weinbaum is coordinating an initiative to develop local area assessments required by Florida Statute.</p>
<p>Dr. David E Gullatt</p>	<p>Dr. David E. Gullatt is a graduate of Louisiana Tech University and the University of Kansas. He has served as a supervisor of administration and curriculum, elementary and secondary principal, and teacher for 29 years within the public schools of Louisiana. For 15 years following those assignments he held teaching, administrative, and supervisory positions in higher education at both Northwestern State University (LA) and Louisiana Tech University. Dr. Gullatt has served as Program Head, Department Head, and Dean of the College of Education at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, LA, retiring in 2012. He has published 22 professional, juried scholarly articles and given over 70 national and international presentations addressing school accountability, operational safety, institutional effectiveness, school law, and student academic growth. For the past 9 years he has served on both SACS and NCS AdvancED System Accreditation visits as Lead Evaluator for over 40 system accreditation visits. Presently Dr. Gullatt is Vice-Chair of the Louisiana SACS-CASI Council and is a field representative for AdvancED in Louisiana. He also serves as an adjunct professor of educational leadership and doctoral research at Louisiana Tech University.</p>

Member	Brief Biography
Dr. Eveleen Lorton	Dr. Eveleen Lorton is an AdvancED certified Lead Evaluator and has served on numerous External Review teams. The fundamental background of her experience comes from years as a classroom teacher, a community college counselor, and a professor for over 30 years at the University of Miami. She has been a member of the AdvancED Florida Council for many years and currently is a Field Consultant on the Council. She has conducted and analyzed the voluminous research that provides compelling evidence that teachers significantly impact students' academic and personal growth. The findings have been published in texts and professional journals. She has conducted workshops and seminars throughout the United States and in the Cayman Islands, Bahamas, St. Croix, St. Maarten, and Central America. Dr. Lorton continues to do what she loves best: impress upon teachers that what they do in the classroom matters.
Mr. Ken Manuel	Currently, I am the Associate Director, AdvancED/SACS Florida. Previously, I was employed in the Duval County Public School System (Jacksonville, FL) for 38 years. During those 38 years, I served the district as an elementary teacher, in-service cadre, elementary principal, middle school principal, elementary director, assistant superintendent for middle schools and regional superintendent.
Dr. Maria Teresa Schwarz	During the last 15 years, Maria T. Schwarz has been, the CEO of Learn Aid Puerto Rico, the standardized testing company servicing mostly all the private schools of the island. Her vast experience in education includes teaching preschoolers and elementary grade students at several sites: Head Start, Private Schools and Antilles Elementary School in Fort Buchanan (DODEA) where she also worked as the Assistant Principal of the Elementary School. For more than 12 years, Dr. Schwarz served as member of the PR NAEYC Board of Directors as President, Vice President and Coordinator. Her educational background and credentials include a BA in Arts and English, an Elementary Teacher Certificate, School Director Certificate, MA in School Administration and Supervision, PhD in Elementary and Early Childhood and a Certificate in Early Intervention from the PR Medical School. Also, is the author of a Bilingual Student Agenda used in private and public schools in PR and a series of Preschool books, workbooks and assessments. Among her other interests and achievements are two years at the Carlota Alfaro School of Dress Design, an Interior Decorator License from the San Juan School of Interior Design followed by two years in the School of Architecture at the UPR.

## Next Steps

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

## About AdvancED

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

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

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

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