

**Report of the  
Quality Assurance Review Team  
for  
Cartersville City School System  
P. O. Box 3310  
15 Nelson Street  
Cartersville, Georgia, United States 30120**

**Dr. Howard Hinesley, Superintendent  
Dr. Rozalyn P. Wright, Chair/Lead Evaluator, Quality Assurance Review Team**

---

---

**Review Dates: 10/23/2011 - 10/26/2011**



*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), and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.*

**Quality Assurance Review Report**

**Contents**

About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI ..... 3

Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review ..... 4

Summary of Findings ..... 5

    Commendations ..... 6

    Required Actions ..... 7

    Next Steps ..... 9

Standards for Accreditation ..... 11

    Standard 1: Vision & Purpose ..... 11

    Standard 2: Governance & Leadership ..... 13

    Standard 3: Teaching & Learning ..... 15

    Standard 4: Documenting & Using Results ..... 17

    Standard 5: Resource & Support Systems ..... 19

    Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications & Relationships ..... 21

    Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement ..... 23

Quality Assurance Findings ..... 25

Schools Visited ..... 27

Conclusion ..... 28

Appendix ..... 29

    Quality Assurance Review Team Members ..... 29

    AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems ..... 29

# 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 and Policies for Quality School Systems.** School districts demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards and policies 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 required actions 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 required actions. The school district acts on the team's required actions 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 and policies.
2. Assess the efficacy of the district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions 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.

**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 District Lead Evaluator 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.

**The Quality Assurance Review Team Report.** Following the visit, the review team completes the Quality Assurance Review report. After review by a nationally-trained reader, the report is submitted to the district. The report contains commendations and required actions for improvement.

**Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions.** The school district uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school district is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The AdvancED State Office is available to assist the school district in addressing the required actions. 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 required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school district is addressing the required actions.

**Accreditation Recommendation.** The Quality Assurance Review team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed by the 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 SACS CASI Georgia State Office (SACS-CASI-GA), a division of AdvancED, visited Cartersville City School System on 10/23/2011 - 10/26/2011.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 16 administrators, 92 teachers, 23 support staff, 52 parents and business partners, 66 students, and 5 Board of Education members for a total of 254 stakeholders. In addition to meeting with district personnel and stakeholders, the team visited 4 schools within the school district. During the school visits, team members interviewed school stakeholders, observed classrooms, and reviewed relevant school artifacts. The team also 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:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED standards focus on systems with a school district and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of the standards lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards. The Quality Assurance Review Team used the AdvancED 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 required actions that are provided below. The commendations and required actions 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 required actions.

## Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the Cartersville City School System 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.

### Commendation 1

Commendation Statement:

The students, parents, staff, school community, administration, and Board of Education for the Cartersville City School District have internalized the district's vision of *"A Tradition of Excellence-Making it Personal."*

Evidence:

Comments from stakeholders during interview sessions and observations during school visits revealed the community's deep sense of family and pride in the school system.

Rationale:

Internalizing the vision demonstrates a strong commitment by all stakeholder groups to the success of all students.

### Commendation 2

Commendation Statement:

The superintendent promotes transparency, is well-respected, trusted, and has established a welcoming environment for students, staff, parents, and community members to share suggestions and concerns.

Evidence:

Comments from all stakeholder groups revealed a great deal of satisfaction with the superintendent, mainly due to his open-door policy and his plight to keep the stakeholders informed.

Rationale:

Creating an atmosphere of trust and transparency fosters buy-in and support from all stakeholder groups, resulting in enhanced achievement and effectiveness system-wide.

### Commendation 3

Commendation Statement:

The system is data rich.

Evidence:

A review of artifacts and discussions with stakeholders revealed that numerous opportunities are provided for staff to gather, analyze, and utilize data system-wide.

Rationale:

The process of gathering, analyzing, and utilizing data to inform instruction and advance the goals of the school or district further ensures and enhances alignment of school and district efforts.

#### Commendation 4

Commendation Statement:

The percentage of highly qualified teachers district-wide has remained 100% for the past four years.

Evidence:

A review of artifacts and discussions with staff indicated that the district works closely with neighboring colleges and universities to recruit highly qualified staff.

Rationale:

Maintaining highly qualified staff continuously at 100% over a four-year period demonstrates the district's commitment to providing the best educators possible while pursuing its vision of *"making it personal"* for the students.

#### Commendation 5

Commendation Statement:

The system employs proactive fiscal planning.

Evidence:

During stakeholder interviews, the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Team was consistently informed of the aggressive measures taken by the district's leadership to ensure that the quality of instruction was not jeopardized because of reductions in funding.

Rationale:

Taking a proactive approach to the budgeting process has resulted in minimal changes in educational programs and activities offered during statewide budget deficits.

#### Commendation 6

Commendation Statement:

The Cartersville City School System has strong community support.

Evidence:

Numerous partnerships have been established, including the GateKey Scholarship Program, Back Pack Buddies, Hands of Christ and Douglas Street After-School Programs, Etowah Community Outreach through Preventative Education (COPE), the Summer Hill Community Tutorial Program (Saturday School), and adult mentoring programs.

Rationale:

Garnering the support of the school community increases the level of commitment of all stakeholder groups in assisting district leaders in realizing the vision of *"making it personal."*

## Required Actions

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

### **Required Action 1**

Required Action:

Research methods to effectively incorporate instructional technology in the curriculum system-wide.

Evidence:

Based on interviews with staff and a review of artifacts, the QAR Team determined that a comprehensive technology plan was established, outlining timelines for purchasing technology, addressing infrastructure needs, and acquiring and maintaining hardware and software. During classroom observations, the QAR Team noted that technological tools were not used consistently in the instructional program.

Rationale:

Incorporating instructional technology in the instructional program can enhance creativity, differentiate instruction, and foster global preparedness for all students.

### **Required Action 2**

Required Action:

Develop a systemic, systematic, sustainable curriculum management model that includes district guidance in planning, implementing, and monitoring standards-based instruction.

Evidence:

Discussions with staff revealed that the district has not established a comprehensive curriculum management model.

Rationale:

Providing a curriculum management model will enhance the standards-based instructional program, ensuring consistency in planning, implementation, and monitoring system-wide. Data gathered through a management model can be used to determine areas of need in terms of instruction and student learning.

### **Required Action 3**

Required Action:

Schedule discussion sessions promptly to engage stakeholders in conversations regarding the district's changing demographics; review and analyze data regarding the changes; determine how these changes are affecting the district; utilize the results to ensure that the diverse needs of the students are properly addressed.

Evidence:

Comments from various stakeholders, along with a review of the artifacts, indicated that the district's student

population has changed, with significant increases in the number of economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English Learners. Some stakeholders, however, did not clearly understand the changing demographics and their overall effect on the district's educational programs.

Rationale:

Engaging stakeholders in conversations regarding the changing demographics will assist staff in understanding the true needs of the students, the staff, and the district in all aspects.

**Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools:** The team reviewed the district's adherence to each of the AdvancED standards. The findings from this review are provided in the next section of this report.

## 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 the school district.
3. Develop action plans to address the required actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the required actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the 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 required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. 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.

### 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 required actions 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.

# Standards for Accreditation

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the district demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

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 required actions 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 required actions.

## Standard 1: Vision & Purpose

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

### Description:

The Cartersville City School System has developed a vision statement that supports a culture of pride, trust, and high expectations, permeating throughout the district. The slogan, "A Tradition of Excellence – Making it Personal," encapsulates the rich, 122-year history of the district, setting the stage to ensure that students are prepared for careers and vocations of the future. The current vision statement was reviewed during the spring of 2011 by board members, administrators, school groups, and community members. As part of the process, the district also reviewed and analyzed perception data gathered from stakeholder surveys. The vision and mission statements are systematically reviewed with revisions made as appropriate.

A review of board meeting agendas revealed that the vision and mission statements were discussed during board meetings. Both statements are conspicuously displayed at the district office and on the system's website. The statements are communicated through various publications, including the "Back to School" newspaper insert, and discussions at school governance council meetings. Stakeholders are very cognizant of these foundational precepts and have internalized the vision. The slogan, "*making it personal*," demonstrates the district's genuine commitment to each child. The district's mission and vision are supported by a set of identified core values, as follows:

- Leadership
- A Sustaining Purpose
- Commitment to the Success of Each Student
- Learning Focused Education
- Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals
- Continuous Improvement
- A Meaningful Workplace
- Involvement of Stakeholders

- Character

The superintendent indicated that the board of education and staff members live by these core values. Each school board meeting includes the discussion of character traits.

Both district and school level improvement plans include clearly identified goals and initiatives that serve to advance the vision. The district's strategic plan, based on the state board-approved system charter, identifies three strategic directions – higher student achievement, stakeholder engagement, and efficient operations. Eight measurable goals are aligned with these strategic directions. These goals address academic achievement in the core areas of reading, English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Additionally, goals have been established to monitor parent perception, media center effectiveness, long range facility planning, and utility expenditures. Targets for performance in each goal area are determined following the review of data compiled in a comprehensive profile of the system, its students, and the community.

The system's vision and mission serve as a guide for the teaching and learning process, as well as the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services. Resources and goals at all levels of the district are aligned to ensure that students are successful as data are routinely shared at the individual student level, thus making teaching and learning personal. Because of the level of personalization, Cartersville City Schools is viewed as a community that cares.

Stakeholders continuously referenced the changing demographics throughout the visit, discussing the challenge of maintaining that personal touch as students enroll with more diverse and intense needs. However, the existing strategic plan only references closing the achievement gap between black and white students. A review of demographic trend data reveals potential growth in other subgroups, including Hispanic and economically disadvantaged populations.

During the past eight years, enrollment for Hispanic students has increased from .8% to 16.0%. Between 2002 and 2010, the percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced-price meals increased from 35% to 52%. The district has been challenged by changing demographics and meeting the diverse needs of the students.

Although the needs of the district are continuously changing, the school community demonstrates remarkable commitment to pursuing the district's purpose and direction. The schools have aligned their goals and improvement plans with the district's strategic plan, resulting in a systemic approach toward achieving the district's vision.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The district's vision, mission, and core values have been internalized by stakeholders and are regularly communicated to the public through various publications and discussions during public meetings.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Review trend data to identify specific demographic categories for potential student growth.
- Develop proactive strategies and initiatives for addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of identified subgroups of students and their families based on projected growth.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the Cartersville City School System has met the

accreditation requirements for the "Vision & Purpose" standard.

## Standard 2: Governance & Leadership

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

### Description:

The Cartersville School District is governed by a seven-member board of education elected by the constituents of the Cartersville community. Their major responsibilities include setting policy; approving educational goals and curricular changes; approving and maintaining a balanced budget; and hiring and providing direction for the superintendent.

The superintendent is recognized and respected by all stakeholders for the guidance, direction, and leadership authority exhibited. He is a visionary, leading the district in a proactive manner, highlighted by an open-door policy. This leadership style is embraced by the staff, parents, community members, and all stakeholders.

A process has been established and implemented for developing policies and procedures to govern the district. Various documents (i.e., staff handbooks, student handbooks, and the Code of Conduct) and ideas from stakeholders are used to assist in developing verbiage for district policies and/or procedures. Upon approval by the board, policies are communicated to stakeholders via the district's website and through staff and student handbooks, as appropriate.

School board members are required by state legislation to participate in professional development activities. Training is offered through the Northwest Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA). Special training opportunities are available for newly elected board members.

District staff members are knowledgeable about curriculum standards and school improvement efforts. Clearly defined lines of authority, along with collaborative relationships and established accountability measures, support the vision, mission, core values, and goals of the school district.

The district's Strategic Plan identifies the board-approved goals that are aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). The individual school improvement plans are aligned with the strategic plan to ensure consistency in pursuing the goals system-wide. Student performance data are regularly shared with and reviewed by the board's curriculum committee to gauge the district's effectiveness.

The public is invited to share comments and provide input during school board meetings. The board solicits comments and suggestions from school personnel, the community, and other stakeholder groups desirous of contributing to the decision-making process, including the adoption of and changes in policies and procedures. Comments from staff members confirmed the effectiveness of the Assistant Superintendent's "Conversation Meetings," which are held twice a year at each school to encourage staff to make suggestions, discuss issues, and share ideas in a non-threatening setting.

The district has garnered the support of its stakeholders, providing adequate resources and serving as good stewards of the district's funds. Efforts to collaborate with community agencies (i.e., Black Ministers Association) demonstrate the district's commitment to finding additional methods to support the district's

vision and focus. The superintendent's philosophy of moving forward, regardless of the financial standing, encourages and empowers stakeholders.

Board Policy authorizes the district to secure legal counsel to represent the district or board and to provide other legal services for the district, as needed. The district has adequate insurance to protect its financial stability. A review of the artifacts and responses during interviews confirmed the district's compliance with local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations.

Conversations with staff and a review of artifacts revealed the need for a more consistent means of evaluating personnel system-wide. While all personnel are evaluated annually, a systemic process facilitated by central office staff could ensure that the evaluation system and professional development are intertwined.

Numerous leadership and decision-making opportunities are available for internal and external stakeholders. The open-door policy exhibited by the superintendent, system leadership, and school administrators promotes a healthy exchange of ideas and information, thus creating a climate of trust and transparency.

The Cartersville City School System provides direction and systematically allocates resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate to ensure student success and achievement.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The district has established an effective organizational structure with a delineated chain of command and open lines of communication.
- Proactive policies and procedures are available for on-going review.
- School governance councils ensure that parents, business members, and teachers are informed of the school's activities, accomplishments, and endeavors.
- School and district leaders are a cohesive unit, demonstrating a commitment to achieving excellence through implementing the district's vision.
- The superintendent's open-door policy and commitment to transparency enhance the climate of the school district. School principals are encouraged to follow his lead, resulting in quality leadership system-wide.
- Trust permeates throughout the system – from the board to the schools to the community.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Develop and implement a consistent, systemic personnel evaluation system.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Cartersville City School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Governance & Leadership" standard.

## Standard 3: Teaching & Learning

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

### Description:

The Cartersville City School District has developed curriculum maps and pacing guides for all grade levels and content areas based on the Georgia Common Core Performance Standards. These documents are available to teachers on the district website and were provided as artifacts for the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Team.

A review of artifacts and discussions with staff revealed that both the school and district curriculum committees meet throughout the year to identify and revise curriculum. Committee decisions are based on student achievement data and changes to the state curriculum. Although the aforementioned procedures are in place, the QAR Team determined that the district does not have a curriculum management model in place to ensure that the curriculum is being taught with fidelity throughout all grade levels and schools. Data gathered through a management model can be used to determine areas of need in terms of instruction and student learning.

Student engagement in learning is a clear expectation for instruction, as evidenced by teacher interviews and classroom observations. *The Effective Teacher* manual was developed by the district during the summer of 2011. Comments during interviews with teachers and administrators revealed that the manual was distributed to all teachers prior to the start of the school year. The manual contains the district's core values, the system's strategic academic goals, research-based instructional strategies, and important elements of quality classroom management and critical design. The contents and proposed use of the manual had not been discussed with staff.

It was evident to the QAR Team that administrators and staff at both the district and school levels set high expectations for student achievement at all grade levels. High achieving students benefit from the knowledge and expertise of teachers certified in gifted education. At Cartersville Primary School, students identified as gifted participate in the Challenge Program using a pull-out model. At Cartersville Elementary School, identified students receive instruction one day a week. All classroom teachers at the middle school are certified in gifted education. Honors classes and advance placement courses are offered at the high school.

Comments from parents and other stakeholders confirmed that teachers clearly communicate curricular expectations to parents. A review of artifacts and comments from parents verified that parents are informed about their children's progress. The online parent portal, BlackBoard, is a user-friendly software program that provides information regarding a child's academic standing and serves as a communication tool for parents to e-mail classroom teachers with questions or comments. During interview sessions, several parents shared that teachers and administrators usually respond to telephone calls and e-mail messages in 24 hours or less.

Student achievement data are shared with all stakeholders through district newsletters, and district and school websites. Results are also displayed in the superintendent's conference room and are included in reports to the school community. The QAR Team noted that the district does not share disaggregated achievement data by ethnicity, gender, special needs, or socioeconomic status with its stakeholders.

Providing such information could assist staff in better understanding and meeting the needs of the diverse student population.

Although district administrators and other stakeholder groups considered the changing demographics of the community to be one of the district's greatest challenges, there was minimal evidence of any training or discussion regarding the topic of diversity. Character education is integrated in the curriculum and could serve as the catalyst for introducing diversity education as an area of focus for students and staff.

The district manages a number of logistical issues daily, including transportation and lunch schedules. However, the QAR Team determined through conversations with internal stakeholders and observations during school visits that protecting instructional time is a priority.

The consolidation of grade levels in the four schools is viewed by administrators, teachers, and parents as a key strength of the Cartersville City School System. However, it was acknowledged in conversations at the district and building levels that the building configuration is a double-edged sword. It benefits the teachers and support staff at a specific grade level by concentrating resources in one building. However, having 11 to 17 teachers assigned to a single grade level within a school sometimes makes it difficult to communicate and collaborate easily.

The district has developed a technology plan that specifies timelines for meeting the technological needs of the district. The QAR Team determined that some teachers utilize technology tools in the instructional program, including document cameras, Nooks, Smartboards, iPods, and e-books.

The QAR Team was unable to clearly determine the degree to which curriculum alignment and articulation between school levels occurs. Discussions regarding the impact of student transitions every two to three years may provide valuable information for the system to consider.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The district sets high expectations for student learning.
- Parents can access student data and communicate with classroom teachers via the parent portal, BlackBoard.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Disaggregate achievement data before sharing the information with various stakeholder groups to enhance their understanding of the needs of the diverse student population.
- Research methods to effectively incorporate instructional technology in the curriculum system-wide to enhance creativity, differentiate instruction, and foster global preparedness for all students.
- Develop a systemic, systematic, sustainable curriculum management model that includes district guidance in planning, implementing, and monitoring standards-based instruction.
- Provide opportunities for courageous conversations regarding the changing demographics. Utilize available data to ensure that appropriate areas are addressed during these conversations (i.e., students with disabilities, staff and student demographics, English Learners, and economically disadvantaged students).

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Cartersville City School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Teaching & Learning" standard.

## Standard 4: Documenting & 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.

### Description:

The Cartersville City School System utilizes a comprehensive assessment program to evaluate student progress on the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), the state developed curriculum. Assessment programs include the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS), Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), Criterion Referenced Competency Test – Modified (CRCT-M), Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA), Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT), Georgia High School Writing Test (GHS WT), End of Course Tests (EOCT), and Georgia Writing Assessments. Cartersville High School students are strongly encouraged to participate in other assessments, such as the American College Test (ACT), Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Analysis of the ACT, PSAT and SAT allows the school district to compare student results with peers across the nation. English learners are evaluated annually using the state mandated assessment, Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS), to measure the acquisition of English language skills.

While the above-mentioned assessment provides summative results, formative tools have an equal and prominent role in shaping instruction in this school system. The district utilizes locally developed benchmark and common assessment instruments. The platform and test item bank varies depending on the school within the district. All schools reported using test items from the Georgia Online Assessment System, ThinkGate, and Kaplan. Professional learning communities within the schools provide opportunities for staff to collaborate to create formative assessment measures. Additionally, skill probes and reading inventories are utilized to assist in progress monitoring of fragile learners.

The district's curriculum team analyzes, disseminates, and uses data to inform instruction. In turn, school representatives serving on the district curriculum team provide guidance and leadership at the school level, leading data teams through professional learning communities. Administrators and teachers are fluent in understanding and using data to impact instruction. The use of data is valued, pervasive, and internalized as a routine operation. All stakeholder groups indicated that district demographics are changing, which has resulted in the need to expand data analysis at the subgroup level.

Interviews with district and school level personnel, observations during school visits, and a thorough review of artifacts substantiates the pervasive use of formative and summative assessment data to guide and inform instruction. The system's strategic plan further supports the analysis and use of data as target goals are established from baseline results indicated in the plan. Results are progress monitored longitudinally through the strategic planning process. The achievement gap among select subgroups is further delineated in the strategic plan. School plans developed from the district plan align school goals and targets. Intended outcomes of improvement efforts were noted throughout the district and school improvement plans. Assessment data are compared with comparable schools and districts to provide perspective and relevance.

The QAR Team reviewed perception data from a 2008 comprehensive survey of stakeholders. The recently developed strategic plan (June 2010) included a goal to measure parent and community satisfaction on a perception survey, anticipating that at least 92% of families would rate the system as a

“B” or higher in overall satisfaction. The new survey is to be developed during the 2011-2012 school year, with full implementation scheduled for the 2012-2013 school year.

District and school results are reported to stakeholders through a variety of methods, including reports to the Board of Education through committees; meetings with business and community leaders at the Chamber of Commerce; newspaper coverage; school and system websites; and state, district, and school report cards. Additionally, letters explaining assessment results are sent to parents along with evaluation reports. Other methods used to communicate assessment results include teacher/student conferences, faculty meetings, curriculum team meetings at the school and system level, school improvement team meetings at the school and system levels, and “Conversation Meetings” and presentations with district and school leadership.

Aggregate and disaggregated subgroup data are available for examination, yet all subgroups with below expected outcomes are not specifically addressed in the district improvement plan. In addition to achievement measures, graduation rate by subgroups should be examined closely with a clear data-based expectation for improvement established for students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and Hispanic students. Although data conversations with district and school level personnel provided a clear view that data are used to inform instruction, the ultimate outcome of graduation rate for students with disabilities was difficult for school personnel to easily identify or address.

District assessment results show student growth across multiple measures, with all of Cartersville City Schools scoring at or above the state average. All schools and the district demonstrated adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the 2010-2011 school year.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The Cartersville City School System is data-rich and has demonstrated a strong commitment to support the use of data in making decisions system-wide.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Establish systemic practices and expectations that expand the analysis and use of data to inform teaching and learning decisions for underperforming subgroups, including students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, Hispanic students, and English learners.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Cartersville City School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Documenting & Using Results" standard.

## Standard 5: Resource & Support Systems

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

### Description:

The Cartersville City School System maintains sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to support the implementation of a curriculum that embraces the vision and purpose of the district, establishes high expectations for learning, meets special needs of students, and complies with local, state, and federal regulations. To ensure the quality of the instructional program, the district seeks to recruit, hire, and retain highly qualified individuals for all positions. The system has student teaching agreements with several nearby colleges and universities, including Kennesaw State University, Berry College, Shorter University, the State University of West Georgia, and Reinhardt College. These post-secondary institutions, as well as other colleges across the southeastern states, serve as venues for recruitment efforts. On numerous occasions, undergraduate students who completed field experiences in the school district are subsequently hired to fill teaching vacancies. A review of artifacts revealed that guidelines have been established to ensure that a sufficient number of staff is maintained to effectively and efficiently meet the vision and purpose of the school district. For the past four years, 100% of teachers and paraprofessionals employed in the district have met federal guidelines for highly qualified status.

Each year, the district conducts a two-day orientation program for new teachers. The orientation includes a review of the district's vision and mission statements, core values, the Code of Ethics, and payroll/benefit information. The district has developed a publication entitled, *The Effective Teacher*, which was presented to staff during the orientation session. Each new teacher is assigned a mentor teacher who provides support throughout the year in critical areas, such as lesson planning, school and district procedures, and location of resources. Funds are allocated through the Title IIA project to pay stipends for mentor teachers and cover costs for substitute teachers so that the mentor and protégé teachers can collaborate and plan. Academic coaches in three of the four schools in the system also provide additional support for new teachers.

The district incorporates job-embedded professional learning opportunities to ensure that staff and administrators are prepared to support and implement the district's expectations for student learning. Interviews with teacher stakeholder groups constantly included reference to the work of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). During meetings of the PLCs, teachers review and analyze data and develop instructional plans to address the specific needs of students. The district also contracts with America's Choice and the local Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) to provide support for implementing standards-based instruction. Schedules and agendas for professional learning opportunities were provided as part of the artifact collection.

The Cartersville City School System effectively maximizes its financial resources to carry out the vision and purpose of the school system. The district has engaged in proactive fiscal planning that has ensured fiscal stability even during bleak economic times. During stakeholder interviews, the QAR Team consistently heard of the aggressive measures taken by the district's leadership to ensure that the quality of instruction was not jeopardized because of reductions in funding. Based on information presented by the superintendent, the total reductions in state austerity over the past ten years is approximately \$11,615,483. Other financial challenges have included lower tax collection rates, increased employer contributions for personnel benefits, and funding technology needs. The district's financial planning has

included prioritizing areas of possible reductions that do not directly impact instruction and using money held in reserve to support payroll obligations. Stakeholders were very supportive of the district's plan and constantly spoke of the fact that the superintendent continues to keep them informed on financial issues by hosting discussion meetings and providing a medium for external and internal stakeholders to provide suggestions for cost reductions. One teacher remarked, "The district leadership has been very open and proactive; they have planned forward for the future." Public support has also been acknowledged by the successful passage of four Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) referendums.

State laws and Department of Education regulations require the district to manage all financial accounts in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. All accounting practices and policies of the district, including the safeguarding of transactions, conform to accounting principles applied to governments and to the accounting procedures and practices outlined by Georgia law and the State Board of Education. A review of artifacts included documentation of annual audits and a financial dashboard developed by the director of finance to visually display the district's standing in terms of income as well as expenditures.

The district has a comprehensive facilities plan that ensures facilities and sites are maintained to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment. The district has five facilities that house instructional programs for its students. Cartersville High School is the oldest building, originally built in 1952. A five year renovation project was recently completed at the high school. A \$2 million renovation project, which includes adding a multi-use facility, is currently underway at Cartersville Middle School. All buildings are aesthetically appealing and support teaching and learning. The district's strategic plan includes a goal to develop a 20-year facility plan to support long-range planning. A comprehensive technology plan also outlines the timeline for purchasing and refreshing technology to address infrastructure needs as well as the acquisition and maintenance of hardware and software. Current technologies available in the schools include document cameras, Nooks, e-books, Smartboards, and iPods. A special pilot program for identified at-risk students enrolled in the Ninth Grade Freshman Academy includes providing each student with an iPad to support the teaching and learning process.

During the review of artifacts, the QAR Team viewed the district's security and crisis management plans as well as plans generated for each school in the district. Staff members indicated they were cognizant of the roles, responsibilities, and procedures outlined in the plans. Drills are conducted to provide practice opportunities for procedural guidance, as indicated in the plans.

Numerous resource and support systems are available to meet the needs of students and families throughout the Cartersville City School System. These supports are aligned with the vision, mission, core values, and expectations for student learning. A full-time nurse is available at the primary, elementary, and middle schools. At the high school, cost containment efforts resulted in the elimination of the full-time nurse's position. However, nursing services are provided at the high school by the health occupations teacher, who is provided extended day compensation for the additional services offered. Each school has two counselors who facilitate guidance and career services for students. Math and literacy coaches are available at three of the four schools along with an intervention specialist and a part-time graduation coach.

Comments during interviews and a review of artifacts revealed that the district provides a variety of student services that are coordinated with the school, home, and community through collaboration with partner agencies. The GateKey Scholarship Program is funded jointly through an anonymous donor and local colleges. Tuition payment is guaranteed for selected at-risk students during two years of post-secondary education at either Georgia Highlands College or Chattahoochee Technical College.

Through collaboration with Black community leaders, a Saturday morning tutorial program has been implemented. Additionally, mentoring and tutorial services are provided in the community through Hands for Christ and the Douglas Street Programs. The Backpack Buddies Program, sponsored by Family Connections, provides students with nutritional snacks to take home each Friday.

Conversations with stakeholders throughout the visit repeatedly referred to the changing demographics of the district and the concern that maintaining the “personal touch” referenced in the vision statement may become a challenge as more students and families enroll with more defined needs. Stakeholders voiced the desire to “continue what we are doing.” The voicing of such concerns may serve as the impetus for initiating conversations to identify proactive measures to address the changing needs of a more diverse population (potentially) while still maintaining traditions of excellence.

Observations by the QAR Team during the entire visit, along with a review of staff demographics, revealed racial, ethnic, and gender gaps among employees in the school district. Of the 319 certified employees, .2% are Hispanic, .5% are Black, 92% are White; 18% are males and 82% are females. Similar data on race, ethnicity, and gender differences were available for classified staff.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- For the past four years, 100% of the district’s teachers and paraprofessionals met federal requirements for highly qualified status.
- The district has engaged in aggressive, proactive fiscal planning that has fostered continuous improvement during bleak economic times. Stakeholders have constantly been included in the planning process through routine meetings and discussions.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Develop proactive strategies and initiatives for addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of identified subgroups of students and their families based on projected growth.
- Evaluate and proactively review district recruitment efforts to establish and maintain a staff that more accurately reflects the demographics of students enrolled in the school system.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Cartersville City School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Resource & Support Systems" standard.

## **Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications & Relationships**

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

**Description:**

The Cartersville City School System utilizes a wide variety of methods to communicate with stakeholders. Conversations with various stakeholder groups supported the system’s assertion that two-way communication prevails district-wide. The open-door concept exists at both the district and school levels. Parents and business members regularly volunteer their time in the district.

Stakeholders verified that they have a variety of opportunities to be formally involved in the life of the

school district. A review of numerous calendars, agendas and minutes of parent and community meetings, and other artifacts reflected efforts by staff to listen and communicate.

District staff members affirmed that they regularly include the community in preparing instructional delivery activities, tapping into the expertise of the community supporters. It was evident to the QAR Team that all stakeholder groups have high expectations for student achievement district-wide. Comments from stakeholders indicated that their recommendations and suggestions are seriously considered by the administration and acted upon, as appropriate.

Various stakeholder groups mentioned that one challenge for the district centers around the district's vision of "making it personal" in the instructional program with the changing demographics. However, the QAR Team did not hear of any planned discussions to address this concern.

The school system maintains an operative website with a direct link to each school's website. Stakeholders shared that the websites are up-to-date and quite useful. Staff can be contacted electronically to ask questions or share concerns. The system also uses Blackberry Connect, which has the capability of contacting every school family within five minutes.

Mass media plays a huge role in communication between the schools and stakeholders. Local news media and radio personnel attend board meetings, and receive press releases from the superintendent. Powerschool, the district's information system, has a parent portal that allows parents to access their children's grades and attendance information. Computers are placed in public housing centers, the public library, and selected churches to ensure that all parents have access to student information.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Internal communication is handled in an efficient manner.
- Intentional outreach programs are in place to help students.
- The city government and city school system have a quality working relationship.
- Mass media communications are in place to highlight school events and ongoing activities.
- The Cartersville School Foundation embraces and supports students.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Initiate open conversations among all stakeholder groups regarding the impact of the changing student demographics on meeting the district's vision of "making it personal."

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Cartersville City School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Stakeholder Communications & Relationships" standard.

## Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

### **Description:**

The Cartersville City School System’s strategic plan drives continuous improvement efforts for the school district. Internal and external stakeholders are comfortable in articulating the strategic plan initiatives. Business and community leaders report a high level of satisfaction with their active involvement in the long-range planning process of the school district, as well as the open and honest communication displayed. The continuous improvement process is well-embedded in the school district’s culture. The vision of the school system, “A Tradition of Excellence – Making It Personal,” is reflected through the strategic plan and verified through stakeholder input obtained through interviews.

The system’s profile is maintained and shared through annual reports and district and school websites. The annual reports also include results of improvement efforts, focusing on established goals for the system and each of the schools.

School improvement plans are aligned with the district strategic plan. The assistant superintendent and director of curriculum review school improvement plans annually to ensure alignment. Monthly meetings with principals and cabinet level personnel allow for ongoing progress monitoring of strategic goals.

The Transition Academy established for 25 ninth-grade students, identified as “at-risk” of either dropping out of school or otherwise not being successful in high school, is a clear demonstration of the district’s commitment to the continuous improvement process to support all students. The decision was data-driven and aligned with the system’s vision of “making it personal.” The allocation of resources aligns with identified needs.

The school district provides a comprehensive job-embedded professional development program for system personnel. Despite the challenging economic times and flexibility allowed through current state regulations, the Cartersville City School System has continued to allocate substantial resources to support continuous improvement. Planning time is provided for the instructional staff system-wide, eliminating interruptions for training during the instructional day.

### **Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The stakeholders of the Cartersville City School System have internalized the system’s vision of “making it personal” with regard to continuous improvement in various aspects.

### **Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Develop a systemic, systematic, sustainable curriculum management model that includes district guidance in planning, implementing and monitoring standards based instruction.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Cartersville City School System 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

“Excellence, empathetic, family, caring, pride, success, tradition, purple, diverse, quality, effective, consistency, focused.”

Such are the terms utilized by stakeholders to describe the Cartersville City School District. All stakeholder groups exhibited a sense of ownership when discussing the district in various aspects. Many are graduates of Cartersville City Schools, some having returned to work in the school system. Therefore, the vision of “making it personal” is more than a slogan for them – it is tradition!

Changes in student demographics present new challenges for the system. Specifically, the district has experienced an increase of students with special needs and must determine methods to effectively meet these needs. It appears that the district has not yet delved into the issue.

The stakeholders praised the superintendent for promoting transparency in the district by keeping the school community abreast of improvement efforts and employing a true open-door policy. He has earned the respect of stakeholders by creating a warm, welcoming climate. School-based administrators are following his lead, utilizing open-door management as well.

The district takes great pride in “making it personal” by ensuring that the individual academic needs of its students are met. The superintendent and school board work together collaboratively and cohesively to ensure that the district continues to move forward.

The district has developed a Strategic Plan, which serves as a guide for schools when developing individual school improvement plans, promoting the systemic alignment of goals and objectives. The district’s vision and mission statements are posted in the schools, further demonstrating school and district alignment.

The system has integrated the AdvancED standards with the Georgia Performance Standards and Title I improvement efforts, employing a blended model in pursuing its goals and objectives. School administrative staffs conduct walk-throughs to observe staff, assess performance, and determine staff development needs to further promote student achievement and success. The superintendent also participates in walk-throughs, which assists him in gaining first-hand knowledge of the teaching capabilities of the instructional staff and the diverse needs of the students system-wide. Data obtained by administrators are shared with staff, as appropriate.

The superintendent expressed the district’s commitment to the AdvancED quality assurance accreditation process, assuring the QAR Team that the required actions identified would be completed with fidelity. The district ensures that stakeholders are advised of improvement efforts through the parent portal, the news media, newsletters, and e-mail.

### Strengths

- Cartersville City School System's administrative head is committed to continuous improvement and quality assurance.

**Opportunities**

- Provide opportunities for both internal and external stakeholders to discuss the changing demographics in the district and the potential impact on meeting the needs of the students.

## Schools Visited

The Quality Assurance Review team visited the following schools during the visit to the Cartersville City School System on 10/23/2011 - 10/26/2011.

Cartersville High School	320 East Church Street	Cartersville	Georgia	30120
Cartersville Elementary School	340 Old Mill Road	Cartersville	Georgia	30120
Cartersville Middle School	825 Douthit Ferry Rd.	Cartersville	Georgia	30120
Cartersville Primary School	315 Etowah Drive	Cartersville	Georgia	30120

## Conclusion

The commendations and required actions 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 required actions 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 required actions for improvement that the school district will need to address. Following this review, the school district will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the district leadership, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for hosting the review team. The team wishes the district and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS-CASI-GA accreditation with AdvancED.

# Appendix

## Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Dr. Rozalyne P. Wright, Chair/Lead Evaluator (ZORAD Consultative Services, LLC)
- Mrs. Wina H. Low, Vice Chair (Carrollton City Schools)
- Dr. Judith D. Backes, Team Member (Dorsch's Sources)
- Dr. Cynthia A. Anderson, Team Member
- Mr. William L. Garrett, Team Member (Jones Elementary School)

## 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](http://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.