



Self Assessment

Aiken County School District

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Introduction

AdvancED's Self Assessment (SA) diagnostic is based on the AdvancED Standards of Quality, which serves as the foundation of the accreditation and continuous improvement process. The SA is a valuable tool for collaboratively engaging staff members and stakeholders in purposeful, honest dialogue and reflection to assess the institution's adherence to the Standards, and guide its continuous improvement efforts. The SA includes the institution's self-ratings of and the evidence cited for each of the indicators, comments that explain the indicator's ratings and an overall narrative for each Standard. The results of the SA are reviewed by the External Review Team as one essential component of the preparation process for the institution's External Review.

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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.

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	The system's process for review, revision, and communication of the purpose statement is documented. The process is formalized and implemented on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement focuses on student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •District purpose statements - past and present •Survey results •Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Minutes from meetings related to development of the district's purpose and direction •Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process for review, revision, and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor and maintain data about each school and provide feedback for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements •Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement •Examples of written stakeholder communications or marketing materials that portray the school purpose and direction 	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is evident in documentation and decision making. This commitment is regularly reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership and staff share high expectations for professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans •Survey results •Statements or documents about ethical and professional practices •Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs •Statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning •The district strategic plan 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Leaders at all levels of the system implement a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. All stakeholder groups are engaged in the process. Personnel maintain a profile with current and comprehensive data on student, school, and system performance. The profile contains analyses of data used to identify goals for the improvement of conditions that support student learning and that are aligned with the system's purpose. Improvement goals have measurable performance targets. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Leaders hold all personnel accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. The process is reviewed and evaluated. Documentation that the process yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available and communicated to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of schools continuous improvement plans •Survey results •Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs •Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings •The district data profile •The district strategic plan 	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Aiken County School District engages in a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate its system-wide purpose for student success. The system's purpose is to create in students a passion for learning and achievement that will serve them as they compete and contribute in a global society.

Systems are in place to revise and reflect upon the district's status and its practices. Teacher surveys are administered from the district, and

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the results are reviewed and analyzed. Survey Monkey, Office 365, and paper surveys are survey tools that are utilized, along with verbal input, to guide internal changes, which are frequently made as a result of the feedback. Principals meet monthly with their academic officers by grade span. During these meetings, principals participate in prescribed professional development, and time is allowed to share research-based, best practices for increasing student success. The Superintendent's Cabinet meets weekly and an instructional leadership team meets bimonthly to discuss results of feedback to make changes to instructional practices. For example, teacher and administrative feedback regarding early release professional development from 2012 through 2014 indicated a need for a more narrow focus for school level professional development as well as professional learning communities. Because of these results, the passage of the Read to Succeed Act, and the action of the South Carolina General Assembly to remove Common Core as the state's standards, the school district changed the format and content of professional development for the 2014-2015 school year.

Schools provide opportunities for parents to provide feedback during school-based events, such as subject area nights, student performances, movie nights, carnivals, and other special events. Schools coordinate events with their parent-teacher organizations to encourage participation and feedback from this stakeholder group.

The district's process for review, revision, and communication of the purpose and direction is well-documented. The district incorporates the review of its purpose and direction in conjunction with the annual update of the District's Strategic Plan, as well as during Cabinet and instructional leadership meetings. District and school purpose and direction statements are included in newsletters and on websites, as well as posted in facilities. These statements are reviewed and revised annually during school-based leadership, PTO, School Improvement Council, and Student Intervention Team meetings.

To strengthen the district's continuous improvement process, the district will continue to include the greater community in its review process and improve the attempts at making all stakeholders aware of its improvement efforts. For example, the district has a written communication/public relations plan, but efforts will be increased and periodic reviews will be scheduled. The district's newly hired Public Information Officer will oversee this task.

The district has developed significant consistency in communication by creating a common web design for school websites and teacher pages through the SchoolFusion platform. The format and protocol for web-based communication are consistent throughout the district. School Fusion, Survey Monkey, Facebook, Twitter, and the district's website are used to disseminate and collect information from stakeholders. Additionally, the PowerSchool Parent Portal allows schools to post specific data about individual students so that parents stay informed about student progress. Emails for teachers are available through this system if parents have questions about student progress.

To sustain the positive direction, a specific process will be implemented to outline communication plans in order to target specific community groups and attendance areas. Having a set process will encourage participation by the diverse communities of the district and ensure that community members have the opportunity for continuous input, reflection, and analysis of district/school programs and goals. The geographic size of the district presents challenges in having district-wide meetings for parents and community members, but district leadership will continue to seek ways to accomplish this task.

The school district ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success. Specifically, each school developed and continues to periodically review and revise as necessary the school's own unique purpose and direction to support the vision of the district. Opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback are regularly scheduled. Documentation of the feedback is compiled and discussed during Student Intervention Team, Title I Planning Team, School Leadership Team, and School Improvement Council meetings.

School leadership and staff are committed to a culture of shared values and beliefs on teaching and learning to support challenging,

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equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students. Because of this commitment, a four-year implementation plan for Common Core State Standards was designed and implemented. Part of the four-year plan included the creation and funding of a District Curriculum Team to lead groups of educators in writing curriculum documents and support materials. This process allows for two-way communication regarding the curriculum and supports the design/implement/evaluate/re-design cycle for curriculum development. The District Curriculum Team participates in state, regional, and national professional learning opportunities to ensure that research-based best practices are embedded in the materials and learning opportunities. Principals and lead educators from each school actively participate in high-quality, monthly local professional learning sessions led by the District Curriculum Team members. To ensure a consistent instructional message is communicated to leaders and school staff, principals replicate the professional development to their teachers on monthly early-release days. As previously mentioned, the district evaluated and restructured the early professional development to meet the requirements of the State and needs of the teachers.

District leadership and staff share high expectations for professional practice. Ongoing large and small-group professional development, administrative coaching, and frequent walk-through and formal teacher observations in classrooms are examples. Consistent expectations for instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills are specific areas of focus. Actions to sustain the areas of strength include district statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning, school improvement plans, the District's Strategic Plan, and well-developed, published professional development plans and timelines.

System leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction by improving conditions to support student learning. Agendas and minutes from meetings, including those of the Superintendent's Cabinet, the Division of Instruction and Accountability, and school administration document data analysis, action plans, and evaluation of results. These plans for improvement are reflected in each school's improvement plan. These plans align with the District Strategic Plan and are communicated throughout the system through school board meetings, the district website, constituency groups, and principal meetings. The local media provides coverage during board meetings and frequently shares school and district activities with stakeholders. Agendas and minutes from faculty, School Improvement Council, Title I Planning Team, and School Intervention Team meetings document the improvement cycle.

The District continues to be challenged to generate stakeholder input. Opportunities for community members are advertised and provided, but not well attended by individuals who do not have students in one of the district's schools. Additionally, the district provides opportunities for community input at a designated time during each board meeting. Efforts to include these stakeholders will continue by raising awareness of opportunities through social media, area churches, area chambers of commerce, and businesses.

Governance and Leadership

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

Overall Rating: 3.83

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	Policies and practices clearly and directly support the system's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices require and have mechanisms in place for monitoring conditions that support student learning, effective instruction, and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices requiring and giving direction for professional growth of all staff. Policies and practices provide clear requirements, direction for, and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Professional development plans •Student handbooks •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •Staff handbooks •District operations manuals •Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions •School handbooks 	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	The governing body has implemented a process to evaluate its decisions and actions to ensure they are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a formally adopted code of ethics, and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members are required to participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The professional development curriculum also includes conflict resolution, decision-making, supervision and evaluation, and fiscal responsibility. Members comply with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations and function as a cohesive unit for the benefit of effective system operation and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Governing authority minutes relating to training •List of assigned staff for compliance •Proof of legal counsel •Assurances, certifications •Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies •Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest •Governing code of ethics 	Level 4

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	The governing body consistently protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations of the system and its schools. The governing body maintains a clear distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of system and school leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communications regarding governing authority actions •District strategic plan •Examples of school improvement plans •Roles and responsibilities of school leadership •Roles and responsibilities of district leadership •Social media •Survey results regarding functions of the governing authority and operations of the district •Stakeholder input and feedback •Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation •Agendas and minutes of meetings 	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders and staff throughout the system deliberately and consistently align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. They encourage, support, and expect all personnel to maintain high standards and to hold students to high standards in all courses of study. All stakeholders are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system actively and consistently support and encourage innovation, collaboration, shared leadership, and rigorous professional growth. The culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community among all stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan •Professional development offerings and plans •Examples of collaboration and shared leadership •Examples of decisions aligned with the school's purpose statement •Survey results •Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans •Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs •Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction 	Level 4

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders communicate effectively with appropriate and varied representatives from stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback and respond to stakeholders, work collaboratively on system and school improvement efforts, and provide and support meaningful leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' efforts result in measurable, active stakeholder participation, engagement in the system and its schools, a sense of community, and ownership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Minutes from meetings with stakeholders •Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action •Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys •Survey responses •Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan •Communication plan •Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	The primary focus of the criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation is improving professional practice in all areas of the system and ensuring student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are consistently and regularly implemented. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are analyzed carefully and used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice throughout the system and ensure student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation •Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation •Job specific criteria •Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice throughout the system and student success noted •Representative supervision and evaluation reports 	Level 4

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

The governing body establishes policies and support practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools. The board establishes written policies to serve as guidelines for its own operations and the successful and efficient functioning of its schools. It operates as a governing body in a manner that is ethical, effective, and in compliance with state laws and procedures. The board policy manual is aligned to the SC School Board Association. Updates and revisions are continual and used to determine the adequacy and effectiveness of those policies. All minutes, agendas, budget and board policies are accessible to all stakeholders through the district's website. Board agendas and minutes serve as a written record of board actions, and all votes are documented. The board communicates regularly with its stakeholders and those affected by its policies and decisions. Public input at regularly scheduled meetings and area meetings are held for decisions requiring community input. Budget workshops, hearings and regular public participation at each board meeting provide fiscal responsibility. An attorney is employed by the school district and is present at all board meetings to ensure ethical and effective operation.

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The school board ensures that leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day to day operations effectively. The district consistently protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of its schools and school leadership. Administrators are able to accomplish goals for student achievement and instruction by using school and district level improvement plans, stakeholder survey results (Title I, State Report Card, and accreditation surveys) and student performance data. Academic officers support principals and assist in academic oversight and planning.

Communication is essential for managing the day-to-day operations in the system and in the schools. Aiken County Public Schools employs a Public Information Officer who manages social media (websites, Facebook, Twitter) and is the district's representative with the news media. In addition to the policies and procedures of the board, school administrators are issued an Administrator's Manual designed to assist in carrying out the day-to-day operations of the system and its schools.

System Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction. The system aligns decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve its purpose. The board holds the superintendent accountable for the administration of its policies and the execution of board decisions. Leadership communicates a clearly defined purpose and direction for the district. Meetings are held at the district and school levels. The superintendent's cabinet meets weekly to discuss policies, best practices, and procedures as well as disseminates information to district staff. Weekly agendas, minutes, and updates are given to all administrators and directors to be shared with staff. District principals' meetings are held monthly. Academic officers conduct meetings with principals and assistant principals to facilitate discussions on district policies, best practices, and procedures.

District leadership effectively engages stakeholders in support of the system's purpose and direction. Leaders communicate effectively with representatives from stakeholder groups at all levels within schools, the community, and businesses. Structures are in place through the district and school-level communication plans for providing information to stakeholders. Automated calling systems are used to relay information to stakeholders. Information about the strategic plan goals, student expectations, achievement data, as well as announcements are provided on the district's website. The board provides dates of regular meetings in annual announcements that are made available to the news media and the public. At the beginning of every board meeting, an opportunity for public participation is provided.

District leadership works collaboratively on system and school improvement efforts and provides meaningful leadership roles for stakeholders. Parent-teacher organizations, school improvement councils, booster clubs and advisory councils are examples of these roles. Community meetings and committees established at the district and school levels allow input on school improvement plans, strategic plans, budgets, and hiring of school principals.

The district provides opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions and provide meaningful feedback. These include web-based and paper surveys for parents, students, and staff. Additionally, the district collaborates and partners with local colleges and universities; community input meetings are held for strategic planning and AdvancED accreditation; K - 12 curriculum teams focus on writing curriculum to address standards for learning; and school improvement councils and parent teacher organizations work to support the efforts of the school and district. As a result of these collaborative efforts, the district has a stronger partnership with businesses, Aiken Technical College and USC-Aiken, resulting in internships, higher dual enrollment for college courses, and technical advanced placements.

Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practices in all areas of the system and improved student success. Supervision and evaluation processes such as classroom observations, Goals-Based Evaluation (GBE), Summative ADEPT Formal Evaluation of Classroom-Based Teachers (SAFE-T), Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT) and improvement plans are consistently and regularly implemented to ensure accountability and guide professional development that ensures student success. Supervision and evaluation instruments are utilized with all certified and classified employees. The instruments are

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aligned to the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and include opportunities for employees to provide feedback for improvement. The criteria and expectations are transparent and can be located on the Human Resources link found on the district website.

The school board recognizes the key to a successful education program is a well-trained, competent staff dedicated to professional growth. Professional development opportunities are provided for district and school leaders through various departments at the district office and through leadership within the schools to ensure student success. Board members are encouraged to attend local, state, and national events. New members of the board receive training on state and national school board issues and policies. Early release days, funds for conferences, on-site assistance with contracted consultants, district curriculum specialists, weekend and summer courses for teachers, and the partnership with USC-Aiken and Ruth Patrick Science Education Center support needs identified through the analysis of test data and surveys. Agendas and sign-in documents from professional development sessions serve as evidence of the district's efforts to meet the needs of all students. The district regularly analyzes the district survey data to determine the needs for future professional development to ensure improved student achievement.

To sustain our areas of strength, the district will continue to support the policies and practices already established within the School Board Governance and Operations manual, continue receiving stakeholder feedback, evaluate programs to determine effectiveness, replicate successes, and stay immersed in current research.

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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.

Overall Rating: 2.92

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Curriculum and learning experiences in each course/class provide all students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills. There is some evidence to indicate curriculum and learning experiences prepare students for success at the next level. Like courses/classes have equivalent learning expectations across the system. Teachers in all schools individualize some learning activities for each student in a way that supports achievement of expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning expectations for different courses and programs • Course, program, or school schedules • Student work across courses or programs • Course or program descriptions • Survey results • Lesson plans • Posted learning objectives • Enrollment patterns for various courses and programs 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Using data from student assessments and an examination of professional practice, system and school personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose. There is a process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction, and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level. The continuous improvement process ensures that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum guides • Standards-based report cards • Surveys results • Program descriptions • Curriculum writing process • Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps • Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum 	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	Teachers throughout the district plan and use instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills. Teachers personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of students when necessary. Teachers use instructional strategies that require students to apply knowledge and skills, integrate content and skills with other disciplines, and use technologies as instructional resources and learning tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation•Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource•Findings from supervisor formal and informal observations•Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool•Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge•Surveys results•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs•Interdisciplinary projects	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	System and school leaders formally and consistently monitor instructional practices through supervision and evaluation procedures to ensure that they 1) are aligned with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning, 2) are teaching the approved curriculum, 3) are directly engaged with all students in the oversight of their learning, and 4) use content-specific standards of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Curriculum maps •Supervision and evaluation procedures •Documentation of collection of lesson plans, grade books, or other data record systems •Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions •Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices •Surveys results •Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process •Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs •Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	Some system staff participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both informally and formally. Collaboration occasionally occurs across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions. Staff members promote discussion about student learning and the conditions that support student learning. Learning, using, and discussing the results of inquiry practices such as action research, the examination of student work, reflection, study teams, and peer coaching sometimes occur among system personnel. System personnel express belief in the value of collaborative learning communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration 	Level 2

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	All teachers throughout the system use an instructional process that informs students of learning expectations and standards of performance. Exemplars are often provided to guide and inform students. The process includes multiple measures, including formative assessments, to inform the ongoing modification of instruction and provide data for possible curriculum revision. The process provides students with specific and timely feedback about their learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Survey results 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	System personnel are engaged in mentoring, coaching, and induction programs that are consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching, learning, and the conditions that support learning. These programs set expectations for all system personnel and include measures of performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs with references to district and school beliefs and values about teaching and learning •Records of meetings and informal feedback sessions •Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff •Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Programs that engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education are designed and implemented. System and school personnel regularly inform families of their children's learning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Performance-based report cards •Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Survey results •Volunteer program with variety of options for participation •List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days •Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress 	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Most school personnel participate in a structure designed by the system that gives them interaction with individual students, allowing them to build relationships over time with the student. Most students participate in the structure. The structure allows the school employee to gain insight into the student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results	Level 2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	All teachers across the system consistently use common grading and reporting policies, processes, and procedures based on clearly defined criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These policies, processes, and procedures are implemented without fail in all schools across all grade levels and all courses. All stakeholders are aware of the policies, processes, and procedures. The policies, processes, and procedures are formally and regularly evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices•Survey results•Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting•Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs•Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning that is aligned with the system's purpose and direction. Professional development is based on assessment of needs of the system. The program builds capacity among all professional and support staff. The program is systematically evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Evaluation tools for professional learning•Survey results•District professional development plan involving the district and all schools•Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	System and school personnel use data to identify unique learning needs of all students at all levels of proficiency as well as other learning needs (such as second languages). System and school personnel stay current on research related to unique characteristics of learning (such as learning styles, multiple intelligences, personality type indicators) and provide or coordinate related learning support services to all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services •Survey results •List of learning support services and student population served by such services •Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning •Data used to identify unique learning needs of students 	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

The Aiken County Public School District is committed to providing high-quality curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices to guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grade levels and courses. The district's curriculum and the monitoring, adjustment, and support of the instructional practices to ensure student success are noted strengths.

The Aiken County Public School 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. The ACPS Curriculum consists of intentionally aligned components - learning outcomes, assessments, learning experiences, content, and instructional strategies - organized into sequenced units to ensure student mastery of grade-level or course-specific standards in pursuit of college and career readiness. The curriculum provides a vertical flow from grade to grade so that there are fewer gaps, overlaps, and omissions of priority standards, to ensure student success at the next level. It also provides a pacing guide that carefully maps out the amount of time needed to teach and assess each unit. Teachers use informal and formal assessment results to individualize learning activities for students. Unit organizers provide "enduring understandings" and "essential questions" as well as priority and supporting standards to ensure equivalent learning expectations across the system. This leads to equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. The curriculum documents are continuously reviewed and modified based on changes in the standards, teacher feedback, and student achievement data.

Additionally, in response to data from multiple assessments and professional development feedback, the district systematically monitors and adjusts the curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments. This process began with the work of curriculum teams made up of district curriculum specialists and teacher representatives from various schools throughout the district. Initially, using the work of Ainsworth (2010) as a guide, these teams participated in curriculum alignment in English language arts, math and social studies, resulting in the ACPS Curriculum and its related resources. State science standards were adopted in 2014, and curriculum teams will begin meeting in 2014-2015 to work in this area. Curriculum teams continue to meet to review available data and share input from colleagues to determine needed changes or additions to the curriculum, pacing guides, and other available resources. Information from each of these teams is discussed during Superintendent's Cabinet and instructional leadership meetings. Information shared at these meetings enables the academic officers to provide coaching sessions during walkthrough observations to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment of the curriculum. Regularly scheduled meetings are held with school leaders to provide training, disseminate information, and discuss school improvement efforts.

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Teachers inform students of expectations by posting learning objectives and essential questions to define the level of engagement and rigor expected; however, more training for staff is needed on using instructional strategies to promote collaboration, self-reflection, and higher order thinking, as well as using formative assessments to drive instructional practices.

The process of using data and examining professional practice continues at the school level with the utilization of Student Intervention Teams (SIT), formerly School Intervention Teams. Although this process has been used for the past four years to review school data, evaluate programs, and identify and assist struggling students, self-reflection during the AdvancED continuous improvement process revealed a need to revise the process to make it more student-centered and consistent across the district. Plans are in place for professional development on the revised process during the 2014-2015 school year. The restructured teams will consist of an administrator, interventionist, and a school psychologist. These teams will meet monthly to review multiple sources of data, both formative and summative, to determine academic and behavioral needs of all students; recommend appropriate research-based intervention strategies for students; support on-going progress monitoring in order to inform instruction; and recommend referrals for evaluation for possible special education or section 504 services.

All first year teachers participate in a formal induction program that includes mentoring and coaching within the school district; however, there is not a formal process/structure to ensure that all personnel are engaged in mentoring and coaching programs beyond the induction year. Although the Department of Special Programs provided training for its support staff at the beginning of the school year, there is a lack of training and coaching for all instructional support staff. As with adults, it is also important that students have mentors and coaches. All schools have student intervention teams. Most high schools have Freshman Academies and some middle and high schools offer advisor-advisee programs; however, the district does not have a structure in place whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience that leads to student success. To strengthen this area of need, the district will continue to support Freshman Academies and other small learning communities in the high schools and the implementation of advisor-advisee programs in the middle and high schools.

From the work of the curriculum teams, Superintendent's Cabinet, district/school leadership teams, Student Intervention Teams, and School Improvement Councils, instructional practices are developed to ensure student success. District and school leaders formally and consistently monitor and support instructional practices through supervision and evaluation procedures beyond classroom observation. The district ensures the alignment and articulation of curriculum and instructional practices through an extensive and structured professional development model. All teachers have been trained in the implementation of the state standards, and teachers are also expected to incorporate instructional practices that include active student engagement and rigorous instruction. To support these efforts, professional development, aligned with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning, includes monthly training for principals in collaboration with lead teachers and assistant principals. The principal, as the instructional leader of the school, then presents the training to the school staff during a scheduled monthly early release day for students. The early release professional development is followed by a teacher survey to determine the effectiveness of the professional learning and additional school/district curriculum needs. Survey results are then discussed during Superintendent's Cabinet and instructional leadership meetings, and adjustments are made to professional development plans based on teacher and administration feedback. Additionally, school leadership teams help to determine staff needs in relation to the schools' professional development plans and determine program evaluation needs in relation to the School Renewal Plans. This information is then shared with the School Improvement Council, which leads to revisions and updates to school renewal plans. These plans are reviewed by the assigned academic officer to ensure the alignment with the district's purpose and direction.

Early release survey results from the 2013-2014 school year indicated that a clearer focus for professional development be established. During the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, instructional coaches assisted with early release professional development in the elementary schools; however, with the passage of the Read to Succeed Act, the role of the elementary instructional coaches changed. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a modification and to the district's professional development plan for early release has been

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implemented. Through classroom observations and the monitoring of the use of data to drive instruction, the district will focus on professional development on using formative assessments. Training began with all administration in the summer of 2014 and follow-up training will continue throughout the 2014-2015 school year on monthly early release days. All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning. On-going collaboration with the University of South Carolina - Aiken with an emphasis at all levels in state standards in math. Mathematic institutes for teachers at all grade levels have been and continue to be held to provide content training as well as standard-based professional development. The district will continue to revise and update the math, English language arts, science, social studies, and cross-curriculum documents to align them with state standards and develop and/or purchase benchmark and formative assessments; implement the High Schools That Work and Making Middle Grades Work key practices; continue ongoing collaboration with USC-Aiken and Aiken Technical College; and implement STEM instruction in each of the middle schools.

District and school personnel also analyze data from MAP and other assessments, as well as lesson plans and daily grades found in Enrich, PowerSchool, and School Fusion to determine the effectiveness of instructional practices and the need for additional support. From the evaluation process, district-level curriculum specialists create professional development to address content-area reading strategies, writing tasks, and differentiated instruction. The review of this information also ensures that instruction is aligned with the district's purpose. The district will implement a system for data-driven decision-making, including extensive professional development for teachers and administrators in analysis of data.

To fulfill the mission of the district, there is a need to have buy-in and support from all stakeholders. It is important that the district and its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress. To ensure that families are engaged and informed in their children's education, the district implemented a district-wide communication plan that includes school contacts and guidelines for each school's home page, teacher profile page, athletic team pages, and student activities pages. The district's website informs parents, teachers, students and the community of valuable information. In addition to providing information about the school district, the website contains links to individual school websites, parent information and teacher resources. All schools provide the Parent Portal through PowerSchool, which provides parents the ability to access their child's grades, schedules, and attendance records. Parents and teachers also communicate through the district's e-mail system. Additionally, the district and schools keep parents informed of programs and activities through school websites, newsletters, academic nights, PTO meetings, open house, automated phone calls, and social media.

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.

Overall Rating: 3.12

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Policies, processes, and procedures ensure that system and school leaders have access to, hire, place, and retain qualified professional support staff. System and school leaders systematically determine the number of personnel necessary to fill all the roles and responsibilities necessary to support purposes, educational programs, and continuous improvement throughout the district. Sustained fiscal resources are available to fund positions critical to achieve the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •District budgets or financial plans for the last three years •District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools •School budgets or financial plans for last three years •Assessments of staffing needs •Documentation of highly qualified staff •Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are focused on supporting the purpose and direction of the system, its schools, educational programs, and system operations. Instructional time is protected in policy and practice. System and school leaders work to secure material and fiscal resources to meet the needs of all students and improve the effectiveness of the system. System and school leaders demonstrate that instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are allocated so that all students have equitable opportunities to attain challenging learning expectations. Efforts toward the continuous improvement of instruction and operations include achieving the purpose and direction of the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of school schedules •District quality assurance procedures showing district oversight of schools pertaining to school resources •Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources •Survey results •Examples of school calendars •Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction •Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction •District strategic plan showing resources support for district 	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	System and school leaders have adopted or collaboratively created clear definitions and expectations for maintaining safety, cleanliness, and a healthy environment, and have shared these definitions and expectations with all stakeholders. All system and school personnel as well as students are accountable for maintaining these expectations. Valid measures are in place that allow for continuous tracking of these conditions. Improvement plans are developed and implemented by appropriate personnel to continuously improve these conditions. The results of improvement efforts are systematically evaluated regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Example systems for school maintenance requests •Survey results •Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements •Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments •Example maintenance schedules for schools •School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes •Example school records of depreciation of equipment 	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	The system has clearly defined policies and procedures for strategic resource management. The system employs a systematic, long-range, strategic planning process in the areas of budget, facilities, and other strategic system components. The strategic planning process is regularly evaluated for effectiveness, and improvement plans related to the process are developed and implemented when necessary. All strategic plans are implemented with fidelity by the governing body, and system leaders and have built-in measures used to monitor and ensure successful implementation and completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems •District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities, learning environments •Evaluation results of the effectiveness of the district strategic plan or indicators of changes resulting in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategic plan •Survey results 	Level 4

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to ensure that all students, school, and system personnel have access to the media and information resources necessary to achieve the educational programs of the system and its schools. The system implements and evaluates processes to ensure qualified personnel are recruited, hired, and retained in sufficient numbers to assist students, school and system personnel in learning about the tools and locations for finding and retrieving information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Data on media and information resources available to students and staff 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	The system provides a fully functional technology infrastructure, working equipment, and a technical support staff to meet the teaching, learning, and operational needs of stakeholders. System and school personnel develop and implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, infrastructure, and equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model •Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level •Survey results •District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level •Assessments to inform development of district and school technology plans •Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness •Examples of school-level technology plans and budgets to improve technology services and infrastructure to students and staff 	Level 2

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the physical, social, and emotional needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Student assessment system for identifying student needs •Survey results •Rubrics on developmentally appropriate benchmarks; e.g. early childhood education •Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education •List of support services available to students 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning •Survey results •Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning •Description of IEP process •Description of referral process 	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

The Aiken County Public School District has clearly defined processes and procedures in place to ensure that the system and school leaders have the ability to hire, place, and retain qualified professional and support staff. The district utilizes technology to post and communicate vacancies on a weekly basis, participates in the annual SC Teacher Expo, and maintains continued partnerships with local colleges and universities to recruit highly qualified teachers and support staff. The district institutes programs such as the Induction and Mentoring Program and monthly early release professional development sessions to continuously improve all teachers and staff in the district and conform to SAFE-T mandates. The school district offers competitive wages for teachers as well as benefits packages for all employees. Although the district works diligently to systematically recruit, employ, and retain highly qualified staff, allocation formulae for some positions are currently under review to accommodate school needs.

The school district's budget is aligned with the system's purpose and direction. Section D, Fiscal Management of the Aiken County School Board policies, supports these objectives. The school district begins its budget process each fall with budget workshops in order to perform a thorough analysis and allow much consideration when developing the budget. In the District Strategic Plan, activities are identified based on priority and resources are allocated.

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Teacher and support staff allocations are determined in the spring each year based upon projected student enrollment. The administration reviews class sizes during the first two weeks of school each year to ensure that schools are adequately staffed and class sizes are appropriate. Throughout the budget input process, a link on the district website allows for anonymous budget input from all stakeholders. This input is shared with district leadership and school board members during budget workshops. Different allocation formulae are employed for small and large schools to ensure that smaller schools are adequately funded to implement their programs.

The district ensures oversight measures are utilized for school resources. The Business Services Department reviews budgets throughout the year. The district employs a local internal auditor who performs periodic reviews of schools' local accounts. Office of Federal Programs staff monitor budget expenditures to make sure budgets align with grant applications and any applicable regulations. Per state law, an external auditor conducts an annual review of all accounts and reports results to the South Carolina Department of Education. State law also requires that a procurement audit be performed at least every three years. The school board has shown a willingness when needed to increase school operating millage to meet budgetary needs. The school board and district administration collaborated with legislators to allow a 1% capital sales tax for the district to address facility needs. Local citizens will have the opportunity to vote on this increase in the November election.

The school district maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff. District policies are developed and implemented for such purposes. A five-year facility plan details needed maintenance and building projects. A district code of conduct and school-level student handbooks provide rules, regulations, and guidelines to promote safe schools. Monthly inspection protocols for equipment and inclement weather and safety drills help to maintain a safe environment. Department of Social Services (DSS) regulations with regard to safety and security are met, as required, in child development classrooms funded under the Read to Succeed Act. School-level custodians and administrators receive training and guidance regarding maintenance standards for cleanliness and sanitation. Training is provided annually on OSHA standards and blood-borne pathogen procedures. The district insurance provider conducts annual facility walkthroughs to determine if safe, sanitary conditions exist in all facilities. Workmen's compensation documentation is maintained to keep schools informed regarding safety requirements. Monthly school safety committee meetings are held to review building-level concerns. Parents, students, and staff are allowed to provide input concerning the physical environment in schools annually on the State Report Card Survey. The District Maintenance Department performs repairs daily on an as-needed basis in all school facilities.

The district practices strategic resource management in support of the purpose and direction of the system. The strategic plan includes the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other vital systems. The district website includes the District Strategic Plan, Five Year Facility Improvement Plan, District Technology Plan, and Budget Plan for review. Plans are reviewed annually with all stakeholders. Each school maintains building policies and handbooks to address school facilities and learning environments. The school board is updated during meetings and participates in the quality control procedures for monitoring the district plans. Survey results from parents, students, and teachers are used to address the school climate goals set forth in the District Strategic Plan.

The school district provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system. Strengths in this area include database programs, such as Powerschool and Enrich, supportive instructional technology such as Smartboards, computer assisted instructional labs, interactive online textbooks, assessment of school needs through surveys, technology use policies, and highly qualified technology support at the school level. Technology staff, both for maintenance and instruction, support individual schools, and technology coaches exist within school buildings. Surveys are conducted to assess the annual evaluation of information resources so that students have access to media and information resources, when needed. Challenges in this area include funding to ensure adequate technology support and infrastructure to support increased technology demands. Actions taken to improve technology are migration to an updated software system, technology upgrades, the addition of wireless technology. Additional

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efforts to address these needs will be incorporated into the District's Technology Plan.

In the area of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of students, strengths include the Student Intervention Team and referral process, individualized student plans such as individualized education program and individual graduation plans, remediation programs, a dual credit system, Aiken County Career and Technology Center partnerships and programs for regular and special education students, various graduation assistance options, positive rapport with school and community agencies and businesses supporting students, character education and anti-bullying programs, using data to direct instruction, and utilizing coordinators, psychologists, career counselors, academic officers, and support personnel to evaluate effectiveness of these systems. Areas for improvement include the need to strengthen the options for identifying and supporting children with repeated discipline problems. To address this concern, the district is piloting a Positive Behavior Intervention System for nine schools. Additionally, efforts are being made to improve alternative learning through a virtual academy, credit recovery offerings, and an alternative school environment.

The school district has designed and implemented a Student Intervention Team process to determine the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students, which then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of each student in the system. This process is being revised, and training is being provided to more effectively identify and serve students. School-based guidance counselors support students in accordance with board policy, and training is provided to counselors by the district's lead guidance coordinator. The school district has a therapeutic counseling program and a school-based counseling program offered through the Department of Special Programs. School-level administrators monitor the performance of school-based counselors and their programs by walk-through observations, formal observations, and informal and formal teacher evaluation processes. Eight Title I student service workers help students and their families overcome barriers in the educational process. These workers also assist students and families with the referral process to outside assistance agencies. The director of Federal Programs monitors the performance of this program. Guidance counselors also assist with the process of referrals to outside agencies.

The school district monitors the academic growth of students through a comprehensive formative and summative assessment program. Teachers, school administrators, and district personnel monitor the effectiveness of the testing program through ongoing data reviews. Teachers, administrators, and district personnel are involved in the monitoring process for all children. If a child is not progressing, a systematic intervention process is initiated through a student intervention team. If necessary, students are referred, evaluated, and if they qualify, provided with special education services or a 504 plan. Internal auditing procedures ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations.

The district mandates that schools comply with all Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) regulations, which require that the foundation of career education begins in elementary school and becomes more in-depth as students progress through middle and high school. In elementary and middle schools, guidance counselors begin exploring careers with students. Students have the opportunity to personalize their paths through lessons and online activities. Career specialists meet with parents and students beginning in eighth grade so that personalized education plans can be developed for each student. This process is monitored by the school administrator using EEDA protocols.

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.

Overall Rating: 3.2

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	All system and school personnel maintain and consistently use a comprehensive assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures. These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system (including non-instructional divisions) performance. The comprehensive assessment system ensures consistent measurement across all classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions. All assessments are proven reliable and bias free. The comprehensive assessment system is regularly and systematically evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model •Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols •Survey results •Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local or school assessments on student learning and school performance •Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness •Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free 	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	Systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning from multiple data sources are documented and used consistently by professional and support staff throughout the district. Data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. System and school personnel use data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning •Survey results •Examples of changes to the district strategic plan based on data results •Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning •List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning 	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	All professional and support staff members are assessed and trained in a rigorous professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data •Documentation of attendance and training related to data use •Survey results •Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	Policies and procedures describe a process for analyzing data that determine verifiable improvement in student learning including readiness for and success at the next level. Results indicate improvement, and system and school personnel systematically use these results to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement action plans related to student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Student surveys •Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data •Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans •Evidence of student readiness for the next level •Evidence of student growth •Evidence of student success at the next level 	Level 3

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Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
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.	System and school leaders monitor comprehensive information about student learning, system and school effectiveness, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals. Leaders regularly communicate results using multiple delivery methods and to all stakeholder groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •District quality control procedures for monitoring district effectiveness •Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals •Survey results •Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals •District quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, systems that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals •Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement •Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups 	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

The Aiken County Public School District utilizes a comprehensive student assessment system to monitor student achievement, provide accountability, and foster program evaluation. This assessment system is comprised of state-mandated assessments and formative and summative assessments selected by our district. The district administered the following mandated assessments during the 2013-2014 school year: SC-PASS for Grades 3-8, HSAP for Grade 10, and EOCEP for Algebra I, English I, Biology, and U. S. History in our middle and high schools, ELDA for Limited English proficient (LEP) students to determine English language competencies, and ITBS and CogAT to screen all second grade students for placement in the district's gifted and talented program. Additionally, the district administered ACT-PLAN for tenth grade students and the PSAT for eleventh grade students to help them prepare for college entrance exams. PLAN and the career planning subtests of EXPLORE were given to eighth grade students to provide data to assist in the development of student Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs).

The district administered Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) in grades one through nine during the 2013-2014 and will administer it to grades two through eight during the 2014-2015 school year. Dominie is used as a reading progress monitoring tool in the elementary schools and Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Inventory Assessments are administered to select elementary students.

The state is replacing the SC-PASS, HSAP, and ELDA with new tests beginning in 2014-15, and the district will participate in training for these assessments. WorkKeys will be administered to all eleventh grade students as part of the state's new assessment system for

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addressing readiness for both college and career. The district will continue to monitor and modify the vertical alignment of the curriculum documents to ensure students are college and career ready from one grade level to the next.

The district continuously collects, analyzes, and applies learning from multiple data sources. District personnel monitor data, including the following: high school on-time graduation rate; ESEA waiver ratings; state report card ratings; state survey data from parents, teachers, and students; Advance Placement test scores; dual enrollment participation and success at Aiken Technical College and the University of South Carolina Aiken; and adult education data, including GED completions. Assessment and program data are maintained by district personnel and utilized as needed for program and administrator evaluation. Data from multiple years allow the district to examine long-term trends. The district monitors achievement gaps among different demographic segments of our student population. Academic officers and school-level administrators perform walk-through and classroom observations throughout the year. Administrators include goals in their evaluation documents to address gaps among student subgroups.

Student progress reports in the form of checklists for kindergarten students and report cards created in PowerSchool for grades one through twelve are sent to parents quarterly. Grades are evaluated based on the state's Uniform Grading Policy. Parents have access to their child's current report card grades in real time throughout the year via the parent portal on PowerSchool. Assessment results are reported to the school board and the community through presentations at meetings, and all stakeholders have access to the district's and each school's state report cards through the State and District websites, which contain assessment results and a multitude of additional information about the educational program at each school.

Although the district stores large amounts of data from multiple assessment measures in its data software system, Enrich, the district acknowledges that improved use of the data to guide instructional practices is one of our district priorities for continuous improvement.

The district provides professional development for administrators and teachers in the utilization of formative measures, but this training is in need of improvement, particularly in terms of involving support personnel. Because of this need, the Special Education Department trained all of its support staff at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year.

Some schools are more proficient than others at evaluating the data for instructional improvement, especially when it applies to helping individual students. Administrators and teachers need more guidance for how to use the data in relevant, practical ways. To address this need, formative assessment training on monthly early release days will be the primary focus for middle and high school administrators and teachers for the 2014-2015 school year. Elementary administrators and teachers were originally included in the overall professional development plan for formative assessment; however, with the South Carolina General Assembly's passage of the Read to Succeed Act, the district had to reprioritize its focus for the elementary schools for 2014-2015.

Student Intervention Teams at every school are one of the district's most emphasized formats for utilizing student data to support learning. However, concerns regarding consistency with the SIT procedures from school to school are evident, and a need to reform the process is in progress. Formal trainings have begun this fall and are scheduled to continue during the 2014-2015 school year.

The district communicates information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of District Strategic Plan goals through the following means: school board presentations, local media organizations, school-level annual reports to parents, parent conference days, quarterly report cards, interim progress reports, ParentPortal, and the annual Superintendent's State of the District address given during Chamber of Commerce meetings and other community service organization meetings. Additionally, schools and the district provide school performance information through Facebook, Twitter, and administrator blogs. A more focused effort will be implemented in the future to ensure that all stakeholders receive information on these topics. The district's public information officer will work with stakeholders to update and implement the District's Communication/Public Relations Plan.

DRAFT

Report Summary

Scores By Section

