April 28–May 1, 2019

# AdvancED® Engagement Review Report

## AdvancED® Diagnostic Review

**Results for: Dr. Ronald E. McNair Junior High School**

## Table of Contents

# Introduction

The AdvancED Diagnostic Review is carried out by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the research aligned to AdvancED Standards. The Diagnostic Review Process is designed to energize and equip the leadership and stakeholders of an institution to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. The Diagnostic Review is a rigorous process that includes the in-depth examination of evidence and relevant performance data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

Standards help delineate what matters. They provide a common language through which an education community can engage in conversations about educational improvement, institution effectiveness, and achievement. They serve as a foundation for planning and implementing improvement strategies and activities and for measuring success. AdvancED Standards were developed by a committee composed of educators from the fields of practice, research, and policy. These talented leaders applied professional wisdom, deep knowledge of effective practice, and the best available research to craft a set of robust standards that define institutional quality and guide continuous improvement.

The Diagnostic Review Team used the AdvancED Standards and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards, but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality. Using the evidence they gathered, the Diagnostic Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report.

As a part of the Diagnostic Review, stakeholders were interviewed by members of the Diagnostic Review Team about their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's learning environment and organizational effectiveness. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidence and data to support the findings of the Diagnostic Review. The following table lists the numbers of interviewed representatives of various stakeholder groups.

| Stakeholder Groups | Number |
|---|---|
| District-level Administrators | 1 |
| Building-level Administrators | 1 |
| Professional Support Staff (e.g., Counselor, Media Specialist, Technology Coordinator) | 8 |
| Certified Staff | 22 |
| Non-certified Staff | 17 |
| Students | 25 |
| Parents | 4 |
| **Total** | 78 |

# AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results

The AdvancED Performance Standards Diagnostic was used by the Diagnostic Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on the AdvancED's Performance Standards identified as essential for realizing growth and sustainable improvement in underperforming schools. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of the three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity**, and **Resource Capacity**. Point values are established within the diagnostic, and a percentage of the points earned by the institution for each Standard is calculated from the point values for each Standard. Results are reported within four categories: Needs Improvement, Emerging, Meets Expectations, and Exceeds Expectations. The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

## Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress toward its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to implement strategies that improve learner and educator performance.

| Leadership Capacity Standards | | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | The institution commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners. | Needs Improvement |
| 1.3 | The institution engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice. | Needs Improvement |
| 1.6 | Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness. | Emerging |
| 1.7 | Leaders implement operational process and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning. | Needs Improvement |
| 1.8 | Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the institution's purpose and direction. | Needs Improvement |
| 1.9 | The institution provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness. | Needs Improvement |
| 1.10 | Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement. | Needs Improvement |

## Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement and success is the primary expectation of every institution. An effective learning culture is characterized by positive and productive teacher/learner relationships; high expectations and standards; a challenging and engaging curriculum; quality instruction and comprehensive support that enable all learners to be successful; and assessment practices (formative and summative) that monitor and measure learner progress and achievement. Moreover, a quality institution evaluates the impact of its learning culture, including all programs and support services, and adjusts accordingly.

| Learning Capacity Standards | | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the institution. | Needs Improvement |
| 2.2 | The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving. | Needs Improvement |
| 2.5 | Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels. | Needs Improvement |
| 2.7 | Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations. | Needs Improvement |
| 2.9 | The institution implements, evaluates, and monitors processes to identify and address the specialized social, emotional, developmental, and academic needs of students. | Needs Improvement |
| 2.10 | Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated. | Needs Improvement |
| 2.11 | Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning. | Needs Improvement |
| 2.12 | The institution implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning. | Needs Improvement |

## Resource Capacity Domain

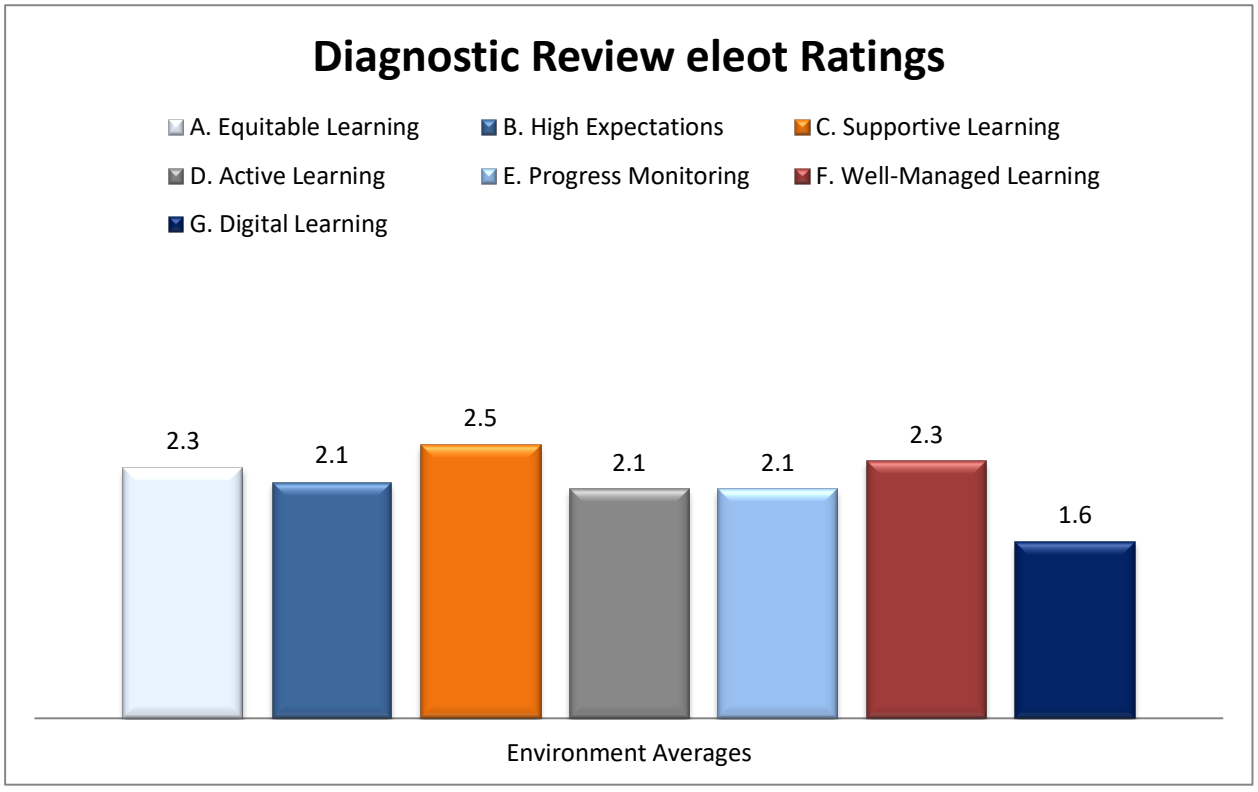
The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably so that the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The institution examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, organizational effectiveness, and increased student learning.

| Resource Capacity Standards | | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | The institution plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the institution's effectiveness. | Needs Improvement |
| 3.2 | The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness. | Needs Improvement |
| 3.4 | The institution attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the institution's purpose and direction. | Needs Improvement |
| 3.7 | The institution demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the institution's purpose and direction. | Needs Improvement |
| 3.8 | The institution allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the institution's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. | Needs Improvement |

# Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) Results

The eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot) is a learner-centric classroom observation tool that comprises 28 items organized in seven environments aligned with the AdvancED Standards. The tool provides useful, relevant, structured, and quantifiable data on the extent to which students are engaged in activities and demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and dispositions that are conducive to effective learning. Classroom observations are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes.

Every member of the Diagnostic Review Team was eleot certified and passed a certification exam that established inter-rater reliability. Team members conducted 13 observations during the Diagnostic Review process, including all core content learning environments. The following charts provide aggregate data across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments.



| A. Equitable Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicators** | **Average** | **Description** | **Not Observed** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Evident** | **Very Evident** |
| A1 | **1.6** | Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs. | 54% | 31% | 15% | 0% |
| A2 | **2.7** | Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support. | 0% | 31% | 69% | 0% |
| A3 | **2.9** | Learners are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner. | 0% | 23% | 62% | 15% |
| A4 | **1.8** | Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions. | 54% | 31% | 0% | 15% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale:** | **2.3** | | | | | |

| B. High Expectations Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicators** | **Average** | **Description** | **Not Observed** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Evident** | **Very Evident** |
| B1 | **2.2** | Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher. | 15% | 54% | 31% | 0% |
| B2 | **2.2** | Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable. | 15% | 54% | 23% | 8% |
| B3 | **2.0** | Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work. | 31% | 38% | 31% | 0% |
| B4 | **2.2** | Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing). | 15% | 62% | 15% | 8% |
| B5 | **2.1** | Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning. | 31% | 31% | 38% | 0% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale:** | **2.1** | | | | | |

| C. Supportive Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicators** | **Average** | **Description** | **Not Observed** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Evident** | **Very Evident** |
| C1 | **2.1** | Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful. | 23% | 46% | 31% | 0% |
| C2 | **2.5** | Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback). | 0% | 46% | 54% | 0% |
| C3 | **2.5** | Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks. | 8% | 31% | 62% | 0% |
| C4 | **2.7** | Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher. | 8% | 23% | 62% | 8% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale:** | | **2.5** | | | | |

| D. Active Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicators** | **Average** | **Description** | **Not Observed** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Evident** | **Very Evident** |
| D1 | **2.2** | Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and teacher predominate. | 31% | 31% | 31% | 8% |
| D2 | **1.8** | Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences. | 54% | 15% | 23% | 8% |
| D3 | **2.2** | Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities. | 23% | 38% | 38% | 0% |
| D4 | **2.1** | Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments. | 31% | 38% | 23% | 8% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale:** | | **2.1** | | | | |

| E. Progress Monitoring & Feedback Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicators** | **Average** | **Description** | **Not Observed** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Evident** | **Very Evident** |
| E1 | **1.8** | Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored. | 38% | 38% | 23% | 0% |
| E2 | **2.3** | Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work. | 15% | 46% | 31% | 8% |
| E3 | **2.3** | Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content. | 15% | 54% | 15% | 15% |
| E4 | **1.8** | Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed. | 46% | 31% | 23% | 0% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale:** | | **2.1** | | | | |

| F. Well-Managed Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicators** | **Average** | **Description** | **Not Observed** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Evident** | **Very Evident** |
| F1 | **2.5** | Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other. | 0% | 54% | 38% | 8% |
| F2 | **2.3** | Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others. | 15% | 38% | 46% | 0% |
| F3 | **2.2** | Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another. | 31% | 15% | 54% | 0% |
| F4 | **2.2** | Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions. | 15% | 54% | 31% | 0% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale:** | | **2.3** | | | | |

| G. Digital Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicators** | **Average** | **Description** | **Not Observed** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Evident** | **Very Evident** |
| G1 | **2.2** | Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning. | 23% | 46% | 23% | 8% |
| G2 | **1.2** | Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning. | 92% | 0% | 8% | 0% |
| G3 | **1.5** | Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning. | 77% | 0% | 23% | 0% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale:** | **1.6** | | | | | |

## eleot Narrative

The Diagnostic Review Team conducted 13 classroom observations, which provided opportunities for instructional practices and learning environments to be observed across the school. Of the seven learning environments, the Supportive Learning Environment earned the highest overall average rating of 2.5 on a four-point scale. The Digital Learning Environment had the lowest overall average rating with 1.6.

Classroom observations revealed few strengths within the seven learning environments. The highest-rated item was found in the Equitable Learning Environment. Instances of students who "are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner" (A3) were evident/very evident in 77 percent of classrooms. The second-highest-rated item was found in the Supportive Learning Environment. In 70 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students "demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher" (C4).

The Diagnostic Review Team found several important practices absent or inconsistently implemented across all seven learning environments. In the Equitable Learning Environment, for instance, students who "engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities" (A1) were evident/very evident in 15 percent of classrooms. In addition, the team primarily observed teacher-directed instruction with few opportunities for student collaboration. This observation was confirmed by findings that in 31 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students "collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments" (D4).

The observations revealed low academic expectations in many classrooms, with instruction frequently failing to engage students in rigorous and challenging learning experiences. It was evident/very evident in 31 percent of classrooms that students "strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher" (B1). In addition, instances of students who "engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)" (B4) were evident/very evident in 23 percent of classrooms. These findings provide the school with an opportunity to increase the complexity and rigor in instructional practices, integrate those expectations into teaching and learning, and clearly communicate those high expectations to students as a way to improve their achievement.

Another concern that emerged related to the lack of learning opportunities for students to demonstrate and/or practice cultural competency. It was evident/very evident in 15 percent of classrooms that students "demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions" (A4), suggesting that in 85 percent of classrooms, observers could not confirm this practice was in place.

Most students could not articulate the attributes of high-quality work. The Diagnostic Review Team observed few students using exemplars or rubrics to guide them in reaching proficiency, as it was evident/very evident in 31 percent of classrooms that students "demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work" (B3). Moreover, students seldom received or used teacher feedback to guide their learning, as it was evident/very evident in 39 percent of classrooms that students "receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work" (E2). Students who "understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed" (E4) were evident/very evident in 23 percent of classrooms.

Finally, the Diagnostic Review Team identified student use of digital tools as an area that the school could leverage to improve motivation and student achievement. All items in the Digital Learning Environment were rated low. It was evident/very evident that students used digital tools/technology to "conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning" (G2) in eight percent of classrooms and to "communicate and work collaboratively for learning" (G3) in 23 percent of classrooms. Although the team observed technology in the hands of students, classroom observation data showed that few students used technology effectively to improve learning or achievement.

By carefully examining data from classroom observations for all items within the seven learning environments, the school will be able to identify additional areas to leverage in order to improve instructional capacity and increase student learning. In addition, improvement priorities outlined in this report will guide the school in prioritizing areas of focus.

# Findings

## Improvement Priorities

Improvement priorities are developed to enhance the capacity of the institution to reach a higher level of performance and reflect the areas identified by the Diagnostic Review Team to have the greatest impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

**Improvement Priority #1**

Develop, implement, monitor, and communicate a continuous improvement planning process that aligns with the school's vision and mission, focuses on student performance, and provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning. The process should include a needs assessment that uses a broad range of data and clearly identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving all improvement goals. (Standard 1.3)

**Evidence:**

**Student Performance Data:**

Student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, suggested the school was not effective in establishing a formalized plan of continuous improvement that produces measurable improvements in the learning environment, student achievement, and professional practice. The percentage of seventh-grade students who met or exceeded the grade-level standards in social studies on the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) increased slightly from 56.5 percent in 2016 to 58.2 percent in 2017. However, in 2018, the percentage of seventh-grade students who met or exceeded grade-level standards in social studies was well below the state average (35.1 percent compared to the state average of 66.4 percent). Likewise, eighth-grade student results on the SCPASS in social studies revealed performance well below the state average with 42.2 percent who met or exceeded grade-level standards in 2017.

Furthermore, the percentage of seventh-grade students who met or exceeded grade-level standards in science on the SCPASS declined from 45.8 percent in 2016 to 18.8 percent in 2017. The percentage of eighth-grade students who met or exceeded grade-level standards in science on the SCPASS declined each year from 46.0 percent in 2016 to 22.5 percent in 2017 to 21.6 percent in 2018. Overall, student performance on the SCPASS reflected achievement well below state averages in both science and social studies for the past three academic years.

A review of the South Carolina College-and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) results indicated that the percentage of seventh-grade students who met or exceeded the English language arts (ELA) benchmark increased from 13.5 percent in 2016-2017 to 24.1 percent in 2017-2018. In addition, the percentage of seventh-grade students who met or exceeded the mathematics benchmark increased from 13.8 percent in 2016-2017 to 17.0 percent in 2017-2018, and the percentage of eighth-grade students who met or exceeded the mathematics benchmark increased slightly from 9.6 percent in 2016-2017 to 10.4 percent in 2017-2018. However, the percentage of eighth-grade students who met or exceeded the ELA benchmark on the SC READY continued to decline from 24.7 percent in 2015-2016 to 21.7 percent in 2016-2017 to 16.2 percent in 2017-2018. Overall, student performance on the SC READY revealed that the percentage of seventh- and eighth-grade students who met the benchmark of "meets or exceeds" in ELA and mathematics fell well below state averages in all three years.

While the student performance data for McNair Junior High School indicated that the percentage of students who scored at 70 or above on the End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 was at 100

percent and well above state averages, the EOCEP data did not identify the number of students from the school who took this assessment.

**Stakeholder Interview Data:**

The principal's overview and stakeholder interview data indicated effort was made to engage the school community in a continuous improvement planning process. The interview data revealed that the principal created a leadership team to facilitate this work throughout the school and multiple goals were established. Although the principal's overview presentation highlighted a school improvement planning process with progress monitoring and the use of data to modify action steps, teachers indicated that they were unclear about the process, and many could not articulate the school's improvement goals. Moreover, teachers were unable to speak to their engagement in a data-driven and collaborative process for continuous improvement. Although several initiatives were taking place in the school, the stakeholder interview data suggested there was not a clear understanding of how these efforts were linked to the school improvement plan, with limited discussion of the ongoing collection and analysis of data to measure results and outcomes related to the identified goals. While stakeholders spoke of several programs or practices for continuous improvement being implemented around curriculum and student performance data analysis, they were unable to describe the school's quality assurance process. Stakeholders could not speak to a needs assessment, measurable objectives, strategies, resources, or timelines for achieving improvement goals. Staff members also indicated that feedback regarding their implementation of the school's expectations and improvements was inconsistent. Overall, interviews with stakeholders indicated the school improvement plan was not intentionally driving the work of school staff members or directly improving the teaching and learning process or professional practice.

**Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:**

Stakeholder survey data indicated that the school inconsistently implemented a continuous improvement planning process that focused on student performance and provided clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning, which represents a leverage point for improvement. Although 90 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school leaders monitor data related to school improvement goals" (G7), parent survey data indicated 79 percent agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school leaders ensure all staff members monitor and report the achievement of school goals" (G1), suggesting this practice, while present in the school, was inconsistent. The survey data indicated 85 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school has established goals and a plan for improving student learning" (C3). Moreover, 83 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school has a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions, and measures of growth" (C5). These findings indicated that revised approaches and strategies leading to a more systematic implementation, monitoring, and revision of the school's continuous improvement plan and quality assurance process would help ensure overall effectiveness and consistency. Eighty-two percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school has a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and using data" (G3). This finding suggests that the identification and monitoring of key performance indicators at the school, classroom, and student levels would allow the school to adjust its educational and operational expectations and progress to achieve desired improvement goals. Lastly, 86 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school communicates effectively about the school's goals and activities" (D5). Although the stakeholder interviews revealed that the level of communication between the school and parents increased, the Diagnostic Review Team recommends the results of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) be consistently and clearly communicated to all representative stakeholder groups. Specifically, the identification of measurable objectives and key performance indicators aligned to the SIP should be included as part of the school's communication plan.

**Documents and Artifacts:**

A review of documents and artifacts indicated that the principal and the school leadership team inconsistently engaged in a continuous improvement and decision-making process to build instructional and organizational capacity. While the principal was goal-oriented and collaboratively worked with stakeholders to establish multiple school goals, the school's continuous improvement planning process and School Improvement Plan (SIP) did not include a needs assessment using a broad range of data with measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving all improvement goals. Moreover, there was no documented evidence of the implementation of a quality assurance process to ensure system effectiveness and consistency through the monitoring of key performance indicators at the school, classroom, and student levels. While the school had structures to provide time for stakeholders to learn and plan collaboratively, the ongoing and effective use of data to drive decision-making by leaders and teachers was not consistently evident in practices or processes.

**Improvement Priority #2**

Review, revise, and consistently implement and monitor the school's behavior management system to ensure that all students are held accountable to consistent high expectations by all school personnel. (Standard 1.7)

**Evidence:**

**Student Performance Data:**

The student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, suggested the school was not effective in implementing and monitoring a behavior management system to create a learning environment supportive of teaching and learning for all students. Student performance data were among those data examined to determine Improvement Priority #2.

**Classroom Observation Data:**

The classroom observation data, as previously discussed, suggested that the school was not effective in establishing a student behavior management system that reflected a culture and climate of high expectations for all students. The High Expectations Learning Environment received an overall rating of 2.1 on a four-point scale. It was evident/very evident in 31 percent of classrooms that students "strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher" (B1). It was also evident/very evident in 46 percent of classrooms that students "demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others" (F2). Instances of students who "speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other" (F1) were evident/very evident in 46 percent of classrooms and who "use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions" (F4) were evident/very evident in 31 percent of classrooms. While the Diagnostic Review Team observed isolated classrooms where learners were well-managed, actively engaged, and held accountable to high behavioral and academic expectations, these types of learning environments were not pervasive throughout the school. Throughout the Diagnostic Review, team members observed inconsistencies in behavioral expectations among teachers, and inconsistencies in their management of students in the classrooms. Furthermore, the team observed some classrooms in which rules and consequences for breaking those rules were not enforced equitably among all students. Consequently, this lack of consistency clearly demonstrated a need to review, revise, implement, and monitor the school's behavior management system.

**Stakeholder Interview Data:**

The stakeholder interview data revealed that staff members believed discipline was an issue that prevented students from learning. Some staff members were concerned with their own lack of experience in or training for establishing effective structures in the classroom to manage behavior. While the school had a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system, interviews with certified and classified staff revealed this structure was not being implemented or monitored with consistency, quality, or fidelity. Although several stakeholders indicated the school was in the beginning stages of implementing the Leader in Me program, observations did not reveal evidence of a systematic approach across the school for embedding these practices in all classrooms to create a social-emotional environment to support high academic achievement.

During the principal's interview, the principal indicated student behavior management was a challenge and often prevented her from focusing on instructional tasks, such as leading and monitoring professional learning community (PLC) meetings or conducting classroom walkthroughs. The assistant principal position was currently vacant; therefore, the principal's administrative tasks in the school were vast and required her to take on responsibilities that might otherwise be delegated and/or shared with another administrator. The principal also shared that staff members participated in professional development emphasizing trauma-informed

strategies/practices to use in the classroom, through the school's partnership with WellSpring Psychology Group. Staff recognized that student behavior concerns could be directly linked to students' socioeconomic status and/or social-emotional learning difficulties, but interviews revealed that many staff members still lacked an understanding of their role in building and improving relationships with students in support of effective teaching and learning.

Students and teachers agreed that student behavior management was an issue at the school. A feeling among some students was that they could do whatever they wanted without fear of consequences. Students indicated that many of their peers showed a lack of interest and motivation. They reported that some students come to school, sit in the back, talk, and disturb the learning environment for others. The stakeholder interviews revealed that a lack of student engagement and apathy toward learning were the school's biggest challenges.

**Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:**

The stakeholder survey data that were related to high academic and behavioral standards substantiated the need for school stakeholders to revise and implement consistent behavior management processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning. Survey data revealed 74 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders expect staff members to hold all students to high academic standards" (D4), and 72 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school's leaders hold themselves accountable for student learning" (D5). Furthermore, 79 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school's leaders hold all staff members accountable for student learning" (D6). Although parent survey results related to high expectations indicated 89 percent agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school has high expectations for students in all classes" (D3), student survey results revealed that 64 percent agreed/strongly agreed that "In my school, the principal and teachers have high expectations of me" (D3). Moreover, 52 percent of students indicated that they agreed/strongly agreed that "My school provides me with challenging curriculum and learning experiences" (E2). Collectively, these survey results demonstrated the school was not effective in creating a culture and climate of high expectations for all staff and students.

**Documents and Artifacts:**

A review of documents and artifacts revealed that student behavior management policies were created and adopted for the school; however, interview and classroom observation data indicated these policies were not consistently enforced throughout the school. Although stakeholder interview data suggested the school had a PBIS plan, no evidence was provided to the Diagnostic Review Team or posted in classrooms about school-wide expectations. Furthermore, there was no evidence of a developed behavior matrix or other documentation to indicate PBIS was being implemented or monitored with consistency, quality, or fidelity. The same held true for the school's implementation of the Leader in Me program. While the program's 7 Habits posters were visible in most classrooms, reference to or deliberate integration of these leadership and life skills was not consistent during instruction. Lastly, the school lacked a consistent process for monitoring referrals for student misbehavior; therefore, the team did not find evidence of the systematic use of these data to improve organizational effectiveness.

**Improvement Priority #3**

Develop, evaluate, and monitor a systematic instructional process that ensures alignment with the school's approved curriculum, standards, and vision. Use research-based instructional practices that (1) prompt and support student engagement, (2) are differentiated and responsive to individual student needs, (3) clearly inform students of learning expectations and standards of performance, and (4) provide frequent checks of understanding with specific and timely feedback. (Standard 2.7)

**Evidence:**

**Student Performance Data:**

The student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, suggested a set of shared values and beliefs based upon high expectations and rigor was not embedded into the school's continuous improvement and instructional processes to support student learning and improve student success. The South Carolina College-and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) results were considerably lower than state averages for the last three years (2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Student performance data were among those data considered to identify Improvement Priority #3.

**Classroom Observation Data:**

The classroom observation data, as previously discussed, clearly suggested the school did not systematically implement research-based instructional practices that were differentiated and responsive to individual students and did not clearly inform students of expectations and standards of performance. The High Expectations Learning Environment received an overall rating of 2.1 on a four-point scale. During classroom observations, students who "engage in rigorous coursework, discussions and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking" (B4) were evident/very evident in 23 percent of classrooms. It was also evident/very evident in 31 percent of classrooms that students "demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work" (B3).

The Diagnostic Review Team noted students who "monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored" (E1) were evident/very evident in 23 percent of classrooms. The team also found little evidence that indicated students were informed about how their work would be assessed, with the Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment receiving an overall rating of 2.1 on a four-point scale. Students who "understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed" (E4), were evident/very evident in 23 percent of classrooms.

A limited number of students were given the opportunity to "collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments" (D4), as it was evident/very evident in 31 percent of classrooms. Moreover, it was evident/very evident in 38 percent of classrooms that students "are actively engaged in the learning activities" (D3).

Although the school emphasized the implementation of a blended learning environment and students had access to Chromebooks, few learners used technology to "conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning" (G2) as it was evident/very evident in eight percent of classrooms. The team also observed that learners who "use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning" (G1) were evident/very evident in 31 percent of classrooms. Collectively, these data suggested the absence of instructional practices and strategies that effectively engage students to ensure achievement of academic expectations.

**Stakeholder Interview Data:**
The interview data revealed that stakeholders could not describe a clear instructional process that included research-based instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. Also, the principal and teachers were unable to describe a school-wide process for monitoring and adjusting instructional practices to meet individual student needs and the learning expectations of the school. While the principal reported that monitoring instruction was a priority, the interview data indicated walkthroughs by the principal or instructional coaches resulted in little feedback specific to defined instructional guidelines or expectations for teaching. The data revealed that some teachers engaged in conversations with each other about high-yield instructional strategies during professional learning community (PLC) meetings; however, many teachers indicated that they lacked experience and professional development in promoting discussions about student learning, such as the examination of student work or the use of formative and summative assessment data to modify and adjust instruction. Furthermore, the interview data revealed that a lack of rigorous instruction and student engagement continued to be a challenge for the school. These data were substantiated by classroom observation data and overall student performance results on the SCPASS and SC READY.

The stakeholder interview data revealed that some student performance data were being reviewed and shared among teachers; however, there was little discussion of how analyzing these data resulted in the adjustment of instruction to meet individual student needs. The school leadership team created the weekly PLC meeting agendas, but the interview data indicated that the meetings were routinely cancelled and the school did not have a process in place to monitor the effectiveness of these meetings. Furthermore, stakeholder interview and classroom observation data revealed that teachers did not understand best practices for engaging students in challenging, collaborative, and differentiated learning opportunities. District-level leadership, school-level leadership, and teachers indicated that rigorous instruction and student engagement were leverage points to improve student achievement.

The team was concerned about the quality of education that the students were receiving at McNair Junior High School. Specifically, the data revealed a disparity of learning opportunities and a lack of challenging learning experiences in all classrooms. The data also suggested that few teachers changed their teaching to meet the individual learning needs of students. Finally, students voiced concern about the loss of instructional time in some classrooms due to behavior and/or discipline challenges.

**Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:**
The stakeholder survey data substantiated that the school did not systematically implement and monitor research-based instructional practices that were differentiated and responsive to individual student needs. Sixty-two percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “All teachers in our school personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of students” (E2). Classroom observation data substantiated the lack of this practice, as students who “engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs” (A1) were evident/very evident in 15 percent of classrooms. In addition, 62 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “All teachers in our school monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment based on data from student assessments and the examination of professional practice” (E1). Sixty percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “All teachers in our school have been trained to implement a formal process that promotes discussion about student learning” (E10), suggesting a leverage point to improve student achievement and professional practice as part of the school’s continuous improvement efforts.

Parent survey results were comparable, with 67 percent who agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “All of my child's teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities” (E3), and 59 percent agreed/strongly

agreed that “All of my child’s teachers meet his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction” (E4). Sixty-nine percent of staff members and parents respectively agreed/strongly agreed with the statements, “All teachers in our school use multiple types of assessments to modify instruction and to revise curriculum” (E7), and “My child is given multiple assessments to measure his/her understanding of what was taught” (E12), which suggests that the use of formative and summative assessment data to evaluate student learning and/or modify instruction to meet individual student needs cannot be confirmed by all stakeholders in the school.

The Diagnostic Review Team was concerned with the student survey results. Thirty-eight percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs” (E9), clearly indicating that many students believed their unique learning needs were not being addressed. Furthermore, 51 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “My school provides learning services for me according to my needs” (E7). Overall, these data clearly revealed the need for research-based instructional strategies to engage learners and for the monitoring and adjusting of instruction to meet individual learners’ needs.

**Documents and Artifacts:**

A review of documents and artifacts revealed curriculum maps and pacing guides for content areas were developed; however, evidence was limited that these documents were being monitored or adjusted based on student performance data. Furthermore, there was no evidence of a school-wide instructional process or of instructional guidelines and expectations to meet the needs of individual students. Although the school developed a lesson plan template that included components of high-yield instructional strategies, the classroom observation data did not substantiate the consistent use of these strategies, and differentiation of instruction was limited toward meeting individual student needs in classrooms. Artifacts revealed limited use of walkthrough data to monitor the quality and fidelity of instructional practices. Moreover, there were no longitudinal data from instructional monitoring processes to demonstrate improvements to student learning and changes to instructional practices over time. Documents and meeting agendas relating to the school’s PLC process were shared as artifacts; however, there was no evidence that data were collected and analyzed to monitor and adjust instruction. Overall, documents and artifacts substantiated a need for the school to develop a systematic instructional process that monitors and provides feedback on the implementation of high-yield instructional practices to meet the needs of all students.

**Improvement Priority #4**

Create, implement, and evaluate a formalized plan of professional development by developing a calendar of purposeful professional learning that is aligned with the school's continuous improvement plan and ensures documented, improved instructional practices. Ensure professional learning activities include but are not limited to mentoring, coaching, and induction programs that support instructional improvement; the use and interpretation of data to support student achievement; and curricular and instructional practices that integrate culturally responsive pedagogy. (Standard 3.1)

**Evidence:**

**Student Performance Data:**

The student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, suggested the school was not effective in establishing a formalized plan of professional development to improve the learning environment, student achievement, and professional practice. Student performance data were among those data used to determine Improvement Priority #4.

**Classroom Observation Data:**

Although the Diagnostic Review Team observed some strengths within the seven learning environments, the classroom observation data, as previously discussed, revealed that some important practices were absent or inconsistently implemented across all seven learning environments. The team primarily observed teacher-directed instruction with few opportunities for student collaboration. This observation was confirmed by findings that revealed in 39 percent of classrooms it was evident/very evident that student "discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and teacher predominate" (D1).

In addition, the team observed low academic expectations in many classrooms. It was evident/very evident in 31 percent of classrooms that students "strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher" (B1). Moreover, instances of students who "engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)" (B4) were evident/very evident in 23 percent of classrooms. Another concern that emerged was related to the lack of instruction designed to meet the individual academic needs of students. It was evident/very evident in 15 percent of classrooms, for example, that students "engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs" (A1). Additionally, most students were unable to articulate the attributes of high quality work. The team saw few students using exemplars or rubrics to guide them in reaching proficiency, as it was evident/very evident in 31 percent of classrooms that students "demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work" (B3). Overall, these data demonstrated the need for a school-wide professional development plan designed to improve professional practice and pedagogical knowledge.

**Stakeholder Interview Data:**

Although stakeholder interview data indicated that some professional development (e.g., trauma-informed practices and Leader in Me) were made available to staff members, a documented formalized plan of professional learning based upon the identified needs of the school was not evident. The principal indicated that the school's current professional development plan was created by previous leadership; therefore, the principal stated that changes in the plan would be forthcoming for the next school year. The principal articulated a desire to offer more opportunities for professional growth. However, evidence of planned professional learning activities based on data-driven needs assessments was limited, including data aggregated from supervision and evaluation processes.

Moreover, the stakeholder interview and staff survey data revealed the school did not have a formal process to support new staff members in their professional practice. The data revealed that some staff members had not

participated in training specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data to support student achievement. Although teachers spoke of common planning time and PLC meetings, the consistent, deliberate use of data to guide collaborative conversations was inconsistent. Furthermore, the stakeholder interviews revealed that PLC meeting agendas were developed by the school's leadership team with little input from classroom teachers. The staff survey data suggested some teachers gathered and used formative and summative data to modify their instruction; however, the stakeholder interview and classroom observation data revealed that an ongoing and effective use of data to drive decision-making by leaders and teachers was limited and inconsistent. In addition, the staff member interview data revealed several new programs were initiated with little professional development and/or training to ensure the quality and fidelity of implementation.

**Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:**
The stakeholder survey data revealed the school was not intentional in planning and delivering professional learning activities based on data-driven needs assessments and data aggregated from supervision and evaluation processes. The survey data revealed that 79 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, a professional learning program is designed to build capacity among all professional and support staff members" (E18), indicating a significant portion of staff members were unable to identify or speak to the school's overall purpose for professional development. In addition, 55 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "In our school, a formal process is in place to support new staff members in their professional practice" (E16), suggesting the need to develop a professional development plan designed to meet the various needs of staff and students. The survey data also revealed that 67 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school ensures all staff members are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data" (G4). Moreover, 76 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, all staff members participate in continuous professional learning based on identified needs of the school" (E17).

The parent and student survey data revealed a lack of collaboration and teamwork to improve student learning. Fifty-five percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my child's teachers work as a team to help my child learn" (E5), and 47 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that "In my school, teachers work together to improve student learning" (C5). Overall, these data substantiated a need for the school to create, implement, and evaluate a formalized plan of professional development aligned with the school's continuous improvement plan that ensures documented improved student achievement.

**Documents and Artifacts:**
Although examples of PLC meeting agendas developed by the school's leadership team were available for review, there was little evidence of a comprehensive professional development plan aligned to or embedded in the school's continuous improvement plan. Furthermore, the team found no evidence that the school used findings from analyzed needs assessment data or data aggregated from supervision and evaluation processes to identify professional learning activities. While the principal and teachers referenced professional development designed to improve student learning and professional practice, purposeful planning of these activities was not evident. Given that the current professional development plan was developed by the former school administration, the lack of ownership increased the possibility of offering fragmented training opportunities that could detract from the school's desired goals.

## Insights from the Review

The Diagnostic Review Team engaged in professional discussions and deliberations about the processes, programs, and practices within the institution to arrive at the findings of the team. These findings are organized around themes guided by the evidence, examples of programs, and practices and provide direction for the institution's continuous improvement efforts. The insights from the Review narrative should provide contextualized information from the team deliberations and provide information about the team's analysis of the practices, processes, and programs of the institution within the Levels of Impact of Engagement, Implementation, Results, Sustainability, and Embeddedness.

Engagement is the level of involvement and frequency with which stakeholders are engaged in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. Implementation is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are monitored and adjusted for quality and fidelity of implementation. Results represent the collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired result(s). Sustainability is results achieved consistently to demonstrate growth and improvement over time (minimum of three years). Embeddedness is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are deeply ingrained in the culture and operation of the institution.

**Strengths:**

Throughout the Diagnostic Review, some themes related to student success and organizational effectiveness at McNair Junior High School emerged. The school developed common vision, mission, and belief statements that defined the institution's principles about teaching and learning. These shared beliefs focused on helping students become leaders in all aspects of their lives; the development of supportive, nurturing relationships to maximize learning; and competence in technology for success in the 21st century. The staff survey data indicated teachers generally believed the school's purpose statement was focused on student success. Stakeholders communicated that the school's vision and priorities placed an emphasis on high expectations for academic achievement, developing student leaders, and preparing learners for life and the college and careers of tomorrow; however, observations of how these shared beliefs were communicated and practiced throughout the school were limited. Furthermore, the principal's overview indicated the school's purpose and priorities were not embedded in all aspects of the school's continuous improvement efforts. The principal openly shared that opportunities for representative stakeholder groups could be leveraged for school improvement.

While this was the first year the principal served in this leadership role at McNair Junior High School, the interview data revealed that stakeholders believed the principal was dedicated to the school community and demonstrated a genuine care for the success of students. The principal was highly visible in the school and made efforts to develop rapport and relationships with parents, teachers, and students. Stakeholders indicated the principal was open to feedback and focused on improving student achievement and professional practice. The principal established a leadership team to facilitate efforts related to the school's continuous improvement plan and goals.

The principal's overview presentation and the stakeholder interview and classroom observation data revealed that some improvement systems and/or instructional frameworks were established to support the teaching and learning process and had the potential for producing gains in student achievement. Weekly PLC time was built into the schedule for teachers to collaborate; the Leader in Me program was in the initial stage of implementation to help shape the culture and climate of the building; and the school partnered with WellSpring Psychology Group to offer professional development to teachers on social-emotional learning strategies and provide direct support and services to students. Furthermore, the school embedded a daily student advisory period into its schedule, to engage students in lessons specific to life-ready leaders (Leader in Me program), social-emotional competencies (Ripple Effects curriculum), and data-based goal setting. The Diagnostic Review Team believes the school has an

opportunity to use a previously developed intervention schedule and the student advisory period to meet the unique needs of all students. Through formalizing and monitoring the PLC structure to ensure all staff members are using a broad range of data to group learners, differentiate instruction, target interventions, and refine curriculum and assessments, the intervention and student advisory periods could be maximized for school improvement.

The stakeholder interviews revealed the school had a PBIS system, but this structure was not implemented or monitored with consistency, quality, or fidelity. The principal and teachers shared that they participated in professional development emphasizing trauma-informed strategies. The interview data suggested an overall sense of caring for the students and teacher willingness and desire to change their professional practices to improve student learning. Many stakeholders cited the school diversity as a strength. The Diagnostic Review Team noted students were respectful and pleasant during interviews and conversations with team members. While staff members reported that student behavior frequently could be directly linked to students' socioeconomic status and/or social-emotional learning difficulties, interview data revealed many staff members still lacked an understanding of their role in building and improving relationships with students.

**Continuous Improvement Process:**
The stakeholder interview and survey data and review of documents and artifacts indicated the principal and staff members inconsistently engaged in a continuous improvement and decision-making process to build instructional and organizational capacity. While the principal was goal-oriented and worked collaboratively with the leadership team to establish school improvement goals, the continuous improvement planning process and plan did not include a needs assessment using a broad range of data with measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving goals. Moreover, there was no documented evidence of the implementation of a quality assurance process to ensure system effectiveness and consistency through the monitoring of key performance indicators at the school, classroom, and individual student levels. Although the school had structures (e.g., PLC meetings) to provide time for stakeholders to learn and plan collaboratively, the ongoing and effective use of data to drive decision-making by leaders and teachers was not clearly evident in practices or processes.

Addressing curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices were areas of needed improvement for McNair Junior High School. Classroom observations revealed a lack of consistent rigorous instruction. Furthermore, students were not provided high-quality work and were not provided with meaningful feedback. Assessment practices indicated teachers sometimes used data in purposeful ways to inform instruction. Teachers participated in professional learning communities; however, the use of formative assessment data to determine student mastery of standards was limited, and professional conversations on curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices were not routine. School leadership is encouraged to find ways to actively engage teachers in collaborating on curriculum alignment, assessment development, the use of data to assess student progress, and differentiated instruction to meet students' individual needs. Furthermore, the school is encouraged to engage all staff members in a collaborative process to implement and monitor instructional processes that emphasize research-based instructional practices, rigorous and challenging learning experiences, and clearly articulated learning expectations and standards of performance. The use of instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, critical thinking skills, differentiated instruction, frequent checks for understanding, opportunities for reteaching, and the effective integration of technology to support academic achievement will be important.

The interview data revealed that stakeholders were unable to articulate a school-wide process for the review and adjustment of curriculum and instruction. The principal indicated the examination of curriculum was important to the school's continuous improvement efforts; however, no formal process was developed to monitor the quality and fidelity of implementation of the adopted curriculum. While stakeholder interviews and a review of evidence

and artifacts indicated that curriculum maps and pacing guides outlined when specific instructional units would be delivered, not all stakeholders were able to define or explain how curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices were monitored and adjusted in response to multiple data points. Furthermore, the staff survey data suggested only some teachers monitored and adjusted curriculum and assessment based on student performance data, indicating this practice was not consistent across the school. The classroom observation data revealed students had limited differentiated learning opportunities and activities to meet their unique learning needs and were rarely provided additional and/or alternative instruction or feedback at the appropriate level of complexity. Therefore, the team recommends the school develop a process to systematically review and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessments based on multiple data inputs.

Overall, effective, results-driven continuous improvement planning processes with systems, programs, and practices were not established; therefore, the results could not be monitored or communicated to stakeholders. The stakeholder interviews and review of documents and artifacts revealed little evidence of a systematic data collection and analysis process to inform school improvement decisions. Although the school presented data sources as evidence, the data were not analyzed or triangulated to provide a picture of program effectiveness. Therefore, the team suggests the school develop a quality assurance and program evaluation process to monitor program effectiveness, schoolwide initiatives, and verifiable growth in student learning. By having the ability to evaluate the impact and success of new or existing programs, the school will be able to make informed decisions about programs and practices that work, need revision, or need to be discontinued.

While the school identified a vision, a mission, and shared beliefs for the academic and social-emotional growth of all students, the interview and observation data did not substantiate that these beliefs were guiding priorities for school improvement. The stakeholder interviews revealed that a more comprehensive sense of urgency was needed among all staff members regarding effective teaching practices and student learning. For desired practices, processes, or programs to become deeply ingrained in the operation of the school, staff and leaders are encouraged to find ways to cultivate a culture of shared responsibility and move from a compliance-driven mindset to one that prioritizes the ongoing analysis and use of data to measure outcomes and continuous improvement efforts.

Although the principal's overview presentation and stakeholder interview data referred to the implementation of an intervention schedule to support the short-term learning needs of all students, there was no discussion of a Response to Intervention (RTI) program or Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework being implemented in the school.

The classroom observation, interview, and survey data suggested that the school did not effectively identify a learning support system to address the unique learning needs of all students. While pieces of student performance data were collected and analyzed during PLC meetings, teacher interviews revealed a lack of research-based interventions available to support the specialized needs of learners. There was no formally documented process for determining the fidelity of implementation of identified interventions and no monitoring of these support services to determine successful outcomes. In addition, the classroom observation data revealed a lack of differentiated learning opportunities and limited extra support to help students understand content and accomplish tasks. Although WellSpring Psychology Group, special education services, and limited course offerings for high school credit met some of the social-emotional, developmental, and academic needs of students, the interview data strongly indicated that the implementation of high-quality student support services was not meeting the specialized needs of all students. Therefore, the Diagnostic Review Team strongly suggests that school personnel provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the specialized needs of learners attending McNair Junior High School.

The principal's overview presentation and stakeholder interview data indicated that some professional development activities were provided to staff members; however, there was no documented formalized plan of professional learning based on needs assessments and data aggregated from supervision and evaluation processes. Although some teachers indicated that new teachers were assigned a mentor, the stakeholder interview and staff survey data revealed the school did not have a formal process to support new staff members in their professional practice. Moreover, the data revealed that not all staff members received training specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data to support student achievement. Teachers spoke of common planning time, but the deliberate use of data to guide collaborative conversations was inconsistent. The staff survey data suggested that some teachers gathered and used formative and summative data to modify their instruction, but the stakeholder interview and classroom observation data did not reveal ongoing and effective use of data by leaders and teachers. A professional development plan that incorporates data analysis, aligns with the school's continuous improvement plan, and is evaluated regularly will offer all educators the professional learning that will enhance opportunities for student achievement. Furthermore, the development of a professional learning plan that allows educators to monitor, verify progress, and modify curriculum and instructional practices will lead to demonstrable improvement in student learning.

In an effort to improve the learning environment and overall student achievement, the Diagnostic Review Team suggests that McNair Junior High School systemically monitor and adjust its behavior management system. The stakeholder interview, survey, and classroom observation data revealed that the school was not effective in implementing and monitoring a student behavior management system that reflects a culture and climate of high expectations for all students. The stakeholder interviews revealed that teachers believed discipline was an issue that prevented students from learning. Although the school used PBIS, stakeholder interviews revealed this structure was not being implemented or monitored with consistency, quality, or fidelity. Although several stakeholders indicated the school was in the beginning stages of implementing the Leader in Me program, and some students had taken on the responsibility of morning announcements, observations did not reveal evidence of a systematic approach to embed the program across all classrooms. The Diagnostic Review Team observed isolated instances of well-managed classrooms where actively engaged students were held accountable for high behavioral and academic expectations; however, these types of learning environments were not pervasive. Throughout the review, team members observed inconsistencies in teachers' behavioral expectations and classroom management techniques. The team observed rules and consequences for misbehavior being enforced inequitably. Students were observed sleeping, talking with their friends, and playing games in classrooms during instructional time. Consequently, this lack of engagement by students and the loss of instructional time clearly demonstrates a need to review, revise, and monitor the school's behavior management system to ensure teaching and learning is the focus in all classrooms.

Although efforts were made to attract and retain qualified personnel, some positions remained vacant at McNair Junior High School. The vacant assistant principal position required the principal to take on responsibilities that might otherwise be delegated to and/or shared with another administrator in the school. Furthermore, the media specialist and one of the school's instructional coaches took on the responsibilities of teaching ELA classes throughout the day due to an open teaching position. Interviews revealed that securing substitutes for teachers was problematic; students sometimes had to go to the gymnasium for classes or were placed in other classrooms. As the school collaboratively works with district personnel to secure needed human, material, and fiscal resources and improve organizational effectiveness, processes to attract, recruit, and retain qualified personnel at the school will be crucial to meeting the needs of all learners.

The interviews suggested that most stakeholders had a willingness and desire to improve the overall educational experience and learning opportunities afforded to students who attend McNair Junior High School. Therefore, the

Diagnostic Review Team encourages the school to use the results of this report and the recommended Improvement Priorities to build a foundation of growth and improvement. This emphasis will ensure that all students receive a challenging and equitable education and that the school's mission and vision is realized.

## Next Steps

The results of the Diagnostic Review provide the next step for guiding the improvement journey of the institution with their efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Diagnostic Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on current improvement efforts and adapting and adjusting their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

Upon receiving the Diagnostic Review Report, the institution is encouraged to implement the following steps:

- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Develop plans to address the Improvement Priorities identified by the Diagnostic Review Team.
- Use the findings and data from the report to guide and strengthen the institution's continuous improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report.

# Team Roster

Diagnostic Review Teams comprise professionals with varied backgrounds and professional experiences. All Lead Evaluators and Diagnostic Review Team members complete AdvancED training and eleot® certification to provide knowledge and understanding of the AdvancED tools and processes. The following professionals served on the Diagnostic Review Team:

| Team Member Name | Brief Biography |
|---|---|
| Dr. Lynn Simmers | Dr. Lynn Simmers serves as the assistant superintendent of Southwest Allen County Schools in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Her interests include literacy and math; analyzing statistical trends to promote improved student achievement; and professional development related to curriculum development, instructional strategies, and teacher induction programs for beginning teachers. Her professional career spans 25 years, including experiences as a teacher, assistant principal, curriculum coordinator, principal, and assistant superintendent. She has had various experiences as a Lead Evaluator of school and system accreditation visits and Diagnostic Reviews for AdvancED/Measured Progress. She participated as a member of the AdvancED Standards Committee and currently serves on the Indiana AdvancED/Measured Progress State Council. Dr. Simmers earned degrees from Manchester College, Indiana University-Purdue University in Fort Wayne, and Indiana State University. |
| Tamika Lowe | Tamika Lowe currently serves as a school Transformation Coach for the South Carolina Department of Education. She has K-6 teaching experience at all levels in rural, suburban, and urban settings. Ms. Lowe's administrative experience includes being a System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP) master teacher, assistant principal of curriculum and instruction, and school assessment coordinator. She has extensive experience in classroom- and building-level analysis and problem-solving, identifying strengths and weaknesses in instruction, offering impactful feedback, and providing individualized professional learning experiences. Ms. Lowe holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, a master's degree in human resources management, and a master's degree in education with a specialization in leadership in educational administration. |
| David Long | David E. Long has worked in the education field for 23 years. He earned a master's degree in student personnel services. He began as a counselor at Midlands Technical College, and then became director of a college and career readiness program for Charleston County School District. Currently, David serves as part of the school improvement team at the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). His main responsibility is managing the school improvement grant, and he assists with other office initiatives such as AdvancEd/Measured Progress Diagnostic Reviews and Progress Monitoring visits. David also manages the School Improvement Advisory Board. He is completing his fourth year at SCDE. |

| Team Member Name | Brief Biography |
|---|---|
| Chad Raynor | Chad Raynor has over 20 years of experience in education. He is currently serving as an assistant principal at Leaphart Elementary School STEAM (Science Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Magnet and has previous administrative experience at both the elementary and middle school levels. In his previous experience at Dutch Fork Middle School, he was part of the team that led that school to earn Palmetto's Finest. He has also served Lexington Richland School District 5 as the Lead PBIS administrator for three years at both the elementary and secondary levels. He is also a certified Data Team trainer and helps coach teams throughout his district. Prior to his administrative experience, he was a National Board Certified middle school social studies teacher. Chad has a bachelor's degree in social studies education and a master's degree in educational administration from the University of South Carolina. |

# Addenda

## Student Performance Data

**Section I: Percentages of Students Meeting Grade-Level Standards at the School on the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) by Grade Level (2017-2018, 2016-2017, 2015-2016)**

| | Grade 7 | | | Grade 8 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 |
| **Science** | | 18.8 | 45.8 | 21.6 | 22.5 | 46.0 |
| **State Avg. Science** | | 46.5 | 70.6 | 48.7 | 49.5 | 66.2 |
| **Social Studies** | 35.1 | 58.2 | 56.5 | | 42.2 | 44.3 |
| **State Avg. Social Studies** | 66.4 | 63.5 | 68.4 | | 67.7 | 69.5 |

**Section II: Percentages of Students Meeting Benchmark of "Meets and Exceeds" on South Carolina College-and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) by Grade Level (2017-2018, 2016-2017, 2015-2016)**

| | 2017-2018 | | | | 2016-2017 | | | | 2015-2016 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | ELA School | ELA State | Math School | Math State | ELA School | ELA State | Math School | Math State | ELA School | ELA State | Math School | Math State |
| 7 | 24.1 | 40.1 | 17.0 | 34.9 | 13.5 | 36.4 | 13.8 | 33.3 | 20.9 | 40.7 | 19.0 | 34.7 |
| 8 | 16.2 | 39.2 | 10.4 | 36.6 | 21.7 | 40.1 | 9.6 | 34.5 | 24.7 | 44.7 | 14.1 | 32.4 |

**Section III: Percentages of Students Scoring at 70 or Above on the End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) (2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018)**

| Content Area | % School (17-18) | % State (17-18) | % School (16-17) | % State (16-17) | % School (15-16) | % State (15-16) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Algebra I** | | 60.5 | 100.0 | 75.1 | 100.0 | 82.4 |
| **English I** | | 53.9 | 100.0 | 77.0 | 100.0 | 78.9 |
| **Biology** | | 59.5 | | 73.8 | | 75.9 |
| **U.S. History** | | 48.9 | | 67.9 | | 71.2 |

## Schedule

**Sunday, April 28, 2019**

| Time | Event | Where | Who |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4:00 p.m. | Team Meeting | The Florence Center | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 4:30 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. | Principal's Presentation | The Florence Center | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 5:15 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. | Team Work Session #1 | The Florence Center | Diagnostic Review Team Members |

**Monday, April 29, 2019**

| Time | Event | Where | Who |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7:45 a.m. | Team arrives at McNair | School Office | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. | Interviews / Classroom Observations / Stakeholder Interviews / Artifact Review | School | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Team returns to hotel | | |
| 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. | Team Work Session #2 | The Florence Center | Diagnostic Review Team Members |

**Tuesday, April 30, 2019**

| Time | Event | Where | Who |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7:45 a.m. | Team arrives at McNair | School | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. | Interviews / Classroom Observations / Stakeholder Interviews / Artifact Review | School | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Team returns to hotel | | |
| 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. | Team Work Session #3 | The Florence Center | Diagnostic Review Team Members |

**Wednesday, May 1, 2019**

| Time | Event | Where | Who |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Final Team Work Session | School | Diagnostic Review Team Members |

**advanc-ed.org**

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## About AdvancED

AdvancED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization serving the largest community of education professionals in the world. Founded on more than 100 years of work in continuous improvement, AdvancED combines the knowledge and expertise of a research institute, the skills of a management consulting firm and the passion of a grassroots movement for educational change to empower Pre-K-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.