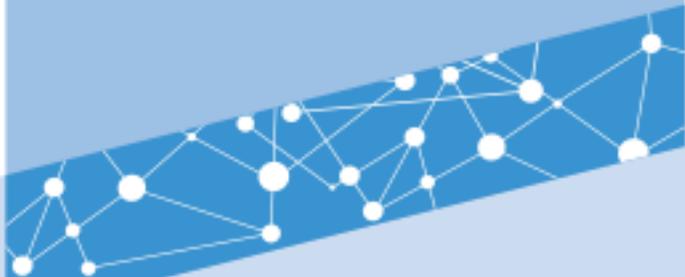


April 14–17, 2019



AdvancED® Engagement Review Report



AdvancED® Diagnostic Review

Results for: Morningside Middle School

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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	0
Building-level Administrators	4
Professional Support Staff (e.g., Counselor, Media Specialist, Technology Coordinator)	7
Certified Staff	22
Non-certified Staff	1
Students	17
Parents	4
Total	55

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.	Needs Improvement
1.7	Leaders implement operational process and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.	Emerging
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the institution’s purpose and direction.	Emerging
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.	Emerging

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.	Emerging
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.

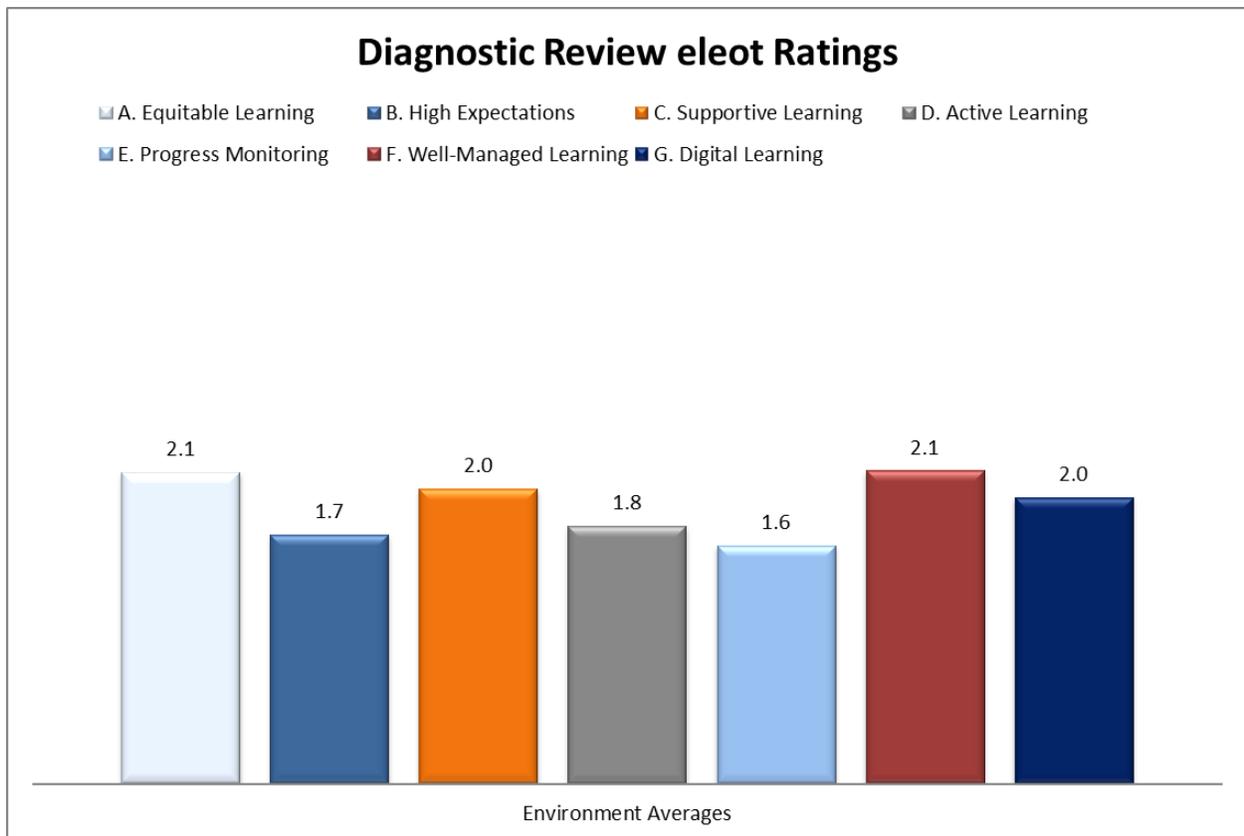
Resource Capacity Standards		Rating
3.1	The institution plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the institution’s effectiveness.	Emerging
3.2	The institution’s professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality 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.	Emerging
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 22 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	1.5	Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs.	55%	36%	9%	0%
A2	2.8	Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support.	5%	23%	59%	14%
A3	2.7	Learners are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner.	9%	32%	41%	18%
A4	1.5	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.	68%	23%	5%	5%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:			2.1			

B. High Expectations Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
B1	1.5	Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher.	64%	23%	14%	0%
B2	2.0	Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable.	32%	36%	32%	0%
B3	1.5	Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work.	59%	36%	5%	0%
B4	1.8	Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing).	50%	18%	32%	0%
B5	1.7	Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning.	45%	36%	18%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:			1.7			

C. Supportive Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
C1	1.8	Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful.	32%	59%	9%	0%
C2	1.8	Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback).	50%	27%	18%	5%
C3	2.2	Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks.	27%	32%	36%	5%
C4	2.3	Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher.	27%	23%	41%	9%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:			2.0			

D. Active Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
D1	1.9	Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and teacher predominate.	41%	32%	23%	5%
D2	1.5	Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences.	59%	27%	14%	0%
D3	2.0	Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities.	32%	41%	27%	0%
D4	1.6	Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments.	64%	18%	9%	9%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:			1.8			

E. Progress Monitoring Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
E1	1.6	Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored.	55%	32%	14%	0%
E2	1.7	Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work.	45%	36%	18%	0%
E3	1.7	Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content.	45%	36%	18%	0%
E4	1.5	Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed.	64%	27%	9%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:		1.6				

F. Well-Managed Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
F1	2.2	Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other.	23%	36%	41%	0%
F2	2.3	Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others.	18%	41%	36%	5%
F3	2.0	Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another.	41%	23%	36%	0%
F4	2.1	Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions.	27%	36%	32%	5%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:		2.1				

G. Digital Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
G1	2.4	Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning.	27%	27%	27%	18%
G2	2.0	Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning.	50%	9%	32%	9%
G3	1.5	Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning.	68%	23%	0%	9%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:		2.0				

eleot Narrative

Classroom observations revealed that most teachers relied heavily on whole group instruction with few accommodations to meet individual student needs. Overall, students seldom engaged in meaningful collaboration, used digital tools/technology for learning, or participated in active learning activities.

A relative strength emerged in the Equitable Learning Environment at Morningside Middle School. In 73 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students “have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support” (A2). Moreover, all students had access to resources within the classroom, which was clearly demonstrated by a 1:1 technology initiative.

The Diagnostic Review Team noted inconsistencies across classrooms in how students and teachers interacted with one another and the degree to which students adhered to behavior expectations. In 59 percent of classrooms, for example, it was evident/very evident that students “are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner” (A3). In 41 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students “speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other” (F1) and “demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others” (F2). The team observed a discrepancy in behaviors between classrooms in sixth grade and classrooms in seventh and eighth grade, which may have affected these data. In sixth-grade classrooms, student behaviors were described as immature but not disrespectful or inappropriate. In seventh- and eighth-grade classrooms, behaviors were more concerning, as students were either disrespectful toward the teacher and classmates or silent and disengaged.

The Diagnostic Review Team generally observed whole-class, lecture-driven instruction or independent seat work, such as worksheets or iReady lessons on individual Chromebooks. In nine percent of classrooms, for example, it was evident/very evident that students “engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs” (A1). In 18 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students “collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments” (D4). In 28 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students’ “discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and the teacher predominate” (D1). Even when students were grouped, they were rarely engaging with one another about the content or talking about something other than the content.

The Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment was the lowest-rated of the seven learning environments. The classroom observation data revealed limited use of formative assessments. It was evident/very evident in 18 percent of classrooms that students “receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work” (E2). It was evident/very evident in nine percent of classrooms that students “understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed” (E4). Further, it was evident/very evident in 18 percent of classrooms that students “demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content” (E3). Finally, it was evident/very evident in 14 percent of classrooms that students “monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored” (E1).

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

Implement supervision and evaluation processes for improving professional practice and organizational effectiveness to support teaching and learning. (Standard 1.6)

Evidence:

Student Performance Data:

The student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, indicated that increases in student learning did not occur across all grade levels and content areas. State assessment results revealed that students at Morningside Middle School performed below the state average on the South Carolina College-and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) and South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) in every content area for three consecutive years (2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018). Negative trends for the percentage of students scoring “Meets and Exceeds” from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 were noted in sixth-grade English language arts (ELA) (9.5 percent to 7.8 percent), eighth-grade ELA (13.2 percent to 5.4 percent), eighth-grade math (5.4 percent to 1.5 percent), sixth-grade science (8.5 percent to 8.2 percent), and eighth-grade science (18.6 percent to 8.3 percent).

Stakeholder Interview Data:

Interview data revealed the lack of a standard evaluation cycle except for the induction of teachers, teachers within the required formal evaluation cycle, or teachers whose licenses were set to expire. Interviews revealed that teachers were able to request observations and receive feedback from instructional coaches. Additionally, the interview data showed that data gathered from teacher observations were required to be recorded in an Excel spreadsheet, but when checked in February 2019, the spreadsheet had not been updated since November 2018. Aside from formal observations, administrators infrequently visited classrooms, according to teacher interviews, and stopped using the South Carolina 4.0 Rubric (evaluation tool used in South Carolina) for informal evaluations midway through the school year. Instead, administrators began using eleot 2.0 when they were informed that the school would be going through the Diagnostic Review Process. The interview data showed that when stakeholders were asked the best thing about working at Morningside, they reported that teachers were given autonomy with little accountability. One stakeholder said, “They don’t tell you what to teach or how to teach, like at other schools.”

During the principal interview, the Diagnostic Review Team noted that the principal answered every question with information about building relationships; however, the principal did not convey how supervision and evaluation practices resulted in actionable feedback for teachers based on instruction.

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

The stakeholder survey data indicated that staff members perceived that leaders implemented supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness. Eighty-four percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school’s leaders hold all staff members accountable for student learning” (D6). Eighty-seven percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our

school's leaders regularly evaluate staff members on criteria designed to improve teaching and learning" (D7), and 77 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school's leaders ensure all staff members use supervisory feedback to improve student learning" (D8).

Documents and Artifacts:

A review of the observation schedule that was submitted as evidence indicated that formal observations began in March 2019. A schedule for teacher observations and/or evaluations occurring prior to March was not provided. Additionally, the school provided no evidence to suggest that South Carolina 4.0 Rubric training or certification occurred for administration or staff prior to March 2019. The team also noted the absence of data to help identify teachers who needed support to improve their professional practices.

Improvement Priority #2

Provide meaningful experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness and build capacity among stakeholders at the school (Standard 1.9)

Evidence:**Student Performance Data:**

Student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, showed that the school did not successfully develop or implement processes and procedures to significantly improve instructional practices and thereby ensure students learned at high levels. The percent of students who met the “Meets and Exceeds” benchmark on the South Carolina College-and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) in 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 were significantly below the state average in all content areas and grade levels.

Stakeholder Interview Data:

The stakeholder interview data revealed that opportunities to lead were limited to the principal, assistant principal, and instructional coaches. The capacity for internal leadership was limited to congenial opportunities based on relationships, which largely supported a belief that internal promotions were primarily based on those relationships.

The data also revealed that staff members were surveyed to determine their interests and needs for professional learning, yet the requests were not always honored. Professional learning topics often defaulted to reactionary responses to immediate issues. The interview data further revealed that the current school year began with a book study. Staff members were provided with a choice of 12 to 13 books, and then they were each expected to share information with one another about their selected book. Staff members were not provided a formal process for the book study, objectives for learning, or guidelines for when and how sharing of information would occur.

The interview data further revealed that the principal often led professional development sessions at the school. In the principal’s absence, such sessions were often cancelled, not allowing others the opportunity to lead. This was substantiated as the team observed that the principal recorded the morning announcements when she had to be out of the office for a meeting, rather than asking an assistant principal, other staff member, or student to deliver information.

Teacher interviews revealed that resources were provided so that teachers could attend professional conferences. Teachers reported attending conferences in Seattle, Philadelphia, and Orlando, to name a few. However, evidence was not provided to demonstrate when or how professional learning from these opportunities was shared or how the participation resulted in improved practices.

The school district also provided professional development opportunities. Teacher interviews revealed that often these sessions were beneficial when content-specific; however, district-sponsored sessions were only offered one or two times per school year. The district provided monthly professional development sessions for the assistant principals; but, interview data revealed that the Morningside assistant principals rotated their attendance and no formal process existed for delivering the content again to those who did not attend.

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

The stakeholder survey data indicated some inconsistency in how staff members perceive opportunities to cultivate and improve collective efficacy and individual leadership capacity. Seventy-seven percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “All teachers in our school participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both informally and formally across grade levels and content areas” (E9). Eighty-seven 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). Ninety-three 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), and 82 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “In our school, a professional learning program is designed to build capacity among all professional and support staff members” (E18).

Survey data indicated that 100 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school shares responsibility for student learning with its stakeholders” (D4) and that “Our school provides opportunities for stakeholders to be involved” (D6).

Documents and Artifacts:

A review of the Professional Development (PD) Plan shared by the school showed meeting dates and topics, but the plan did not designate the person responsible for providing the professional development. Further, the topics did not align with the stated goals and initiatives shared by the principal in her presentation to the Diagnostic Review Team. Other documents, including a “Peer Caravan” schedule and Faculty Senate meeting minutes, supported the existence and use of some shared leadership practices.

Documentation of leadership opportunities for all stakeholder groups was not provided.

Improvement Priority #3

Develop and implement a process to continuously assess the effectiveness of programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning. (Standard 2.12)

Evidence:**Student Performance Data:**

The student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, suggested the school did not successfully develop or implement processes for assessing the effectiveness of programs, initiatives, services, and organizational conditions. The percent of students who met or exceeded benchmarks on the SC READY in 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 were significantly below state averages in all content areas and grade levels. Student performance data were among those data used to determine Improvement Priority #3.

Classroom Observation Data:

Classroom observation data revealed inconsistencies in the implementation of programs and initiatives in classrooms. For example, it was stated that all teachers were delivering a social-emotional learning curriculum during University 101. The team observed that while some teachers delivered review lessons in language arts and math, others allowed students to watch videos, including “CNN Kids” and “Magic School Bus.”

Stakeholder Interview Data:

The stakeholder interview data showed that the principal discussed multiple programs and initiatives that were positively affecting students. The principal shared anecdotal data from the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) programs, but no quantitative data were shared to demonstrate a positive impact on student achievement. The principal noted that writing scores increased, but no evidence was provided to demonstrate an increase in writing proficiency.

The interview data revealed that staff members believed programs were implemented inconsistently and that the school lacked a process for monitoring or evaluating their effectiveness. Staff members were concerned that many programs were started in the school without an understanding of the purpose or need for implementation fidelity. Staff members stated that there was little follow-through once a program was started and no evaluation process to determine the extent to which a program impacted student learning.

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

The survey data indicated that the school had a process to continuously assess student learning. Ninety-two percent of staff members, for instance, agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school uses multiple assessment measures to determine student learning and school performance” (G1), and 77 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school employs consistent assessment measures across classrooms and courses” (G2). Eighty-nine percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school has a systematic process for collecting, analyzing and using data” (G3). Eighty percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school ensures all staff members are trained in the evaluation, interpretation and use of data” (G4), and 100 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school leaders monitor data related to school achievement” (G6).

Documents and Artifacts:

While the school implemented many programs (e.g., AVID, University 101, Capturing Kids Hearts), a review of the artifacts provided by the school did not yield data on the impact or effectiveness of these programs. The AVID plan had a start date of 2016 and indicated that the presence of AVID would be advertised to the school community

through posters in the hall; however, no evidence was observed that supported this action. No evidence of any program evaluation was provided.

Improvement Priority #4

Implement, evaluate, and monitor processes that identify and address the specialized social, emotional, developmental, and academic needs of students. (Standard 2.9)

Evidence:**Student Performance Data:**

The student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, showed that the school did not establish and implement effective processes that address the specialized social, emotional, developmental, and academic needs of students. The percentage of students who met or exceeded benchmarks on the SC READY in 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 was significantly below the state average in all content areas and grade levels. Student performance data were among those data reviewed to determine Improvement Priority #4.

Classroom Observation Data:

The classroom observation data, as previously discussed, generally revealed teacher-centered, whole-group instruction with little to no attention given to the needs of individual students, opportunities for collaboration, or formative assessment. It was evident/very evident in nine percent of classrooms that students “engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs” (A1). It was evident/very evident in 10 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). It was evident/very evident in 41 percent of classrooms that students “are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks” (C3), and in 18 percent of classrooms that students “receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work” (E2).

Despite the increasing English Learner population, teachers were often observed asking other Spanish-speaking students to translate, instead of using an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) staff member. The Diagnostic Review Team did not observe ESOL staff members working with students in general education classrooms or providing support to the teachers.

The team also noted that a daily rotation of teachers, including instructional coaches, was filling a teacher vacancy for English language arts. Consequently, students were being taught by a different English teacher each day of the week.

Stakeholder Interview Data:

Although the school implemented multiple programs, initiatives, and practices to support students, multiple stakeholder interviews revealed a lack implementation consistency and sustainability. For example, the school district provided the Second Step program; however, teachers indicated that it was not used with fidelity. Stakeholders also shared that there was no process for referring students to In-School Suspension or for determining the amount of time that students were placed there. While the number of disciplinary referrals decreased, the number of disciplinary incidents did not. Administrators and teachers indicated that the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) program was implemented, but lacked fidelity. Weekly MTSS meetings were scheduled to identify students who might need specialized services, programs, or resources; however, the meetings only occurred when the principal was available. Stakeholders shared that the school implemented multiple programs, such as University 101, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Capturing Kids Hearts, to address students’ social, emotional, and developmental needs. However, stakeholders reported that the accountability of implementing the programs ceased as the school year progressed. The interview data

revealed a lack of faculty and staff member accountability to report progress, deficits, gaps and/or effectiveness of programs, initiatives, or practices. Further, the programs were not monitored or adjusted to ensure quality implementation. The stakeholder interview data also revealed that the descriptions and objectives of these programs were not understood or consistently used among staff.

The teacher interview data revealed that there were many specialized needs in classrooms, such as English as a Second Language; however, little to no support for them was provided.

The student interview data revealed that the students enjoyed some of the programs and initiatives (e.g., related arts classes, after-school programs) that the school provided. Students also mentioned incentives, such as “Mustang Bucks,” that were given as a reward for good behavior and used to purchase items and privileges from the school store (e.g., a “dress down” pass, pencils, other school materials). Students expressed a desire for improvements in behavior among their peers (e.g., addressing the frequency of fights in the hallway and other areas throughout the school; enforcement of punishments for those breaking the rules). Students also indicated a need for more evening events, including student participation in performances and field trips that provided learning opportunities outside of the school walls.

Both student and parent interviews revealed a need to address the behavioral and emotional states of students. An interview with the principal revealed that county psychologists serve students in the school; however, students were required to complete a form requesting a meeting with psychologists to “check-in,” discuss other emotional issues such as stress, sadness, hurt, etc.

Observation and interview data revealed that opportunities to participate in some programs named as successful (e.g., STEM, AVID, [PBL] problem-based learning) were not provided to all students in an equitable manner.

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

The stakeholder survey data revealed differing perceptions among stakeholder groups regarding the implementation of processes that identify and address the specialized needs of learners. One hundred percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that “All of my child’s teachers meet his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction” (E4) and “My child has access to support services based on his/her identified needs” (E14). Student responses were far more negative. Fifty-five percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “In my school, programs and services are available to help me succeed” (C1), and 49 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “My school provides learning services for me according to my needs.” Thirty-seven percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs” (E9). Forty-seven percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “In my school, I have access to counseling, career planning, and other programs to help me in school” (F7). Additionally, 84 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “In our school, related learning support services are provided for all students based on their needs” (E12), and 82 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “In our school, all staff members use student data to address the unique learning needs of all students” (E14). Seventy-nine percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school provides high quality student support services (e.g., counseling referrals, educational and career planning)” (E8).

Documents and Artifacts:

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) scores for students were posted in a school data room. The team observed, that with few exceptions, these data had not been updated since the Fall 2018 benchmark window. The team did not find a formal process or guidelines regarding expectations around updating or analyzing student performance data.

The Diagnostic Review Team observed some social contracts and instances where teachers greeted students with a handshake. It was also observed that some teachers used Mustang Bucks as a part of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program. However, the practice was inconsistent across the school.

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:

Stakeholder interviews, survey data, and observations of classrooms and informal interactions throughout the building indicated strong relationships among students, staff, and parents. Morningside Middle School administrators, faculty, and staff members demonstrated advocacy for their students and faculty. When asked what the best thing about the school was, all stakeholder groups indicated "the people." Students indicated that teachers cared about them personally, and parents echoed this sentiment. Strong relationships were also seen in classroom observations where students were treated in a fair and consistent manner. The team also observed that students generally demonstrated respectful and congenial relationships with their teachers, resulting in well-managed learning environments.

The team noted that the Morningside Middle School administration, faculty, and staff provided programs, practices, and initiatives to support the physical, emotional, social, and academic needs of their students. The school employed two full-time school counselors and two district-funded psychologists, all of whom work with students on social and emotional issues. Also, the school employed additional support staff, including a behavioral intervention specialist, who provides support to students and faculty to minimize discipline referrals.

Efforts were ongoing to ensure students also had opportunities to explore and experience extracurricular activities and extended school services, as well as to connect to the community through various school events.

Continuous Improvement Process:

While the administration, faculty, and staff at Morningside Middle School is to be applauded for its efforts in strengthening relationships, the continuous improvement process needs to focus more heavily on student academic performance. The Diagnostic Review Team noted the importance for all stakeholders at Morningside Middle School to be intentional and consistent when implementing practices to ensure their efforts are aligned with their academic goals. Limiting the number of new programs and processes in order to ensure fidelity of implementation was identified as a leverage area for improvement. The team also noted that consistently monitoring and evaluating programs and processes for impact was needed. Finally, the team noted that consistent, ongoing, and embedded professional learning opportunities for faculty and staff around specific academic programs, instructional design, and the use of data for instructional decisions to meet individual student needs could be leveraged toward building collective efficacy and improved teaching and learning.

The school implemented a system of supports that could be used to promote student learning, such as University 101, PBIS, AVID, and STEM. While stakeholders shared that data were generated from these programs, little was analyzed in conjunction with student academic performance. This system of support could be leveraged to promote the same structures focused on instruction, academic student performance, and practices around monitoring and evaluation as part of the school's continuous improvement process.

Finally, the team noted that the school needs district-level support as it begins the continuous improvement work. District leadership was noticeably absent during the Diagnostic Review process and, based on multiple stakeholder interviews, was an accurate representation of district involvement at the school. In multiple interviews, it was shared that Morningside Middle School did not appear to be a priority for the district. Stakeholders indicated that resources were not allocated equitably among the middle schools in the district, attendance zones were drawn in a way that put the school at a disadvantage, and the visibility of district office personnel was limited. The team concluded that a collaborative and supportive relationship between the school and district office could result in an opportunity for successful turnaround.

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. Staci Kimmons	Dr. Kimmons has 19 years of experience as an educator. She currently serves as the director of curriculum and instruction for Georgia Cyber Academy in Atlanta, Georgia. In this position, she coordinates the selection of curriculum and supplemental programs and tools for elementary, middle, and high school students. She is responsible for maintaining institutional effectiveness by conducting academic compliance audits and drafting academic policies for the district. Dr. Kimmons holds a doctorate degree in educational leadership and policy from Marquette University. She also has a master’s degree in educational psychology, bachelor’s degree in psychology, and add-on certification in educational leadership. Dr. Kimmons has served as an adjunct professor for Concordia University, Grand Canyon University, and Eastern Washington University.
Dr. Karen Bradford	Dr. Bradford has 19 years of experience as an educator. She currently serves as Transformation Coach for the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of School Transformation. In this position, she assists, supports, and coaches school-level administration and school leadership teams in the design and implementation of improvement planning, data analysis, assessment, and organizational strategies that increase academic capacity and sustainable transformation measure. She is responsible for principal support, instructional support, and teacher efficacy in the assigned high priority, high need schools. Dr. Bradford holds a doctorate degree in the administration of special education programs from Nova Southeastern University. She also earned a master’s degree in special education, a master’s degree in administration and music, a bachelor’s degree in music education-vocal, and an add-on certification in literacy. Dr. Bradford has served as a graduate assistant for the special education faculty at Arkansas State University and as a core II dissertation reader for Virginia University of Lynchburg.
Mrs. L. Michelle Peay	Mrs. Peay has worked in various capacities in the field of education for 18 years. She is currently the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme coordinator for Richland School District One in Columbia, South Carolina. In this position, she coordinates programs to include curriculum and professional development for a cluster of three schools authorized or seeking authorization to offer one of the four IB Programmes. She is responsible for working with five school-based coordinators with three programs to ensure curricular alignment with district, state, national, and international standards and practices. Ms. Peay holds a master’s degree in administration, a master’s in teaching secondary English, and a bachelor’s degree in English all from the University of South Carolina. Ms. Peay also earned a master’s degree in divergent learning from Columbia College, and is currently in the dissertation phase for a doctorate at the University of South Carolina. Ms. Peay serves as a consultant, team member and leader, workshop leader, and consultant for the International Baccalaureate Organization.

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Mrs. Jillian Stroud	Mrs. Stroud holds a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from the University of South Carolina, Columbia, and a master’s degree in reading education from Wheelock College, Boston. She is a Read to Succeed certified literacy coach and teacher. Mrs. Stroud also holds an endorsement in gifted and talented instruction. She has 12 years of experience as an educator working in rural, urban, and suburban settings. Mrs. Stroud currently serves as a Transformation Coach for the South Carolina Department of Education. In this role, she provides guidance, support, and coaching for schools in building leadership capacity to influence teaching and learning that will positively affect student outcomes. She assists in principal and instructional support, as well as professional learning and efficacy.
Mrs. Courtney Wilson	Mrs. Wilson has been in education for 12 years, first as a classroom teacher and currently as an assistant principal. Within those 12 years, she has served in various leadership roles. On the school level, Mrs. Wilson chaired various committees and served as grade-level chairperson. On the district level, she was a member of the SLO advisory board and mentor teacher for Georgetown County Schools. Most recently, she has served on the state level as the Lower Coastal Regional Director for the South Carolina Association for Middle Level Educators. Mrs. Wilson earned a bachelor’s degree in political science and a master’s degree in teaching secondary social studies from Winthrop University and a master’s degree in educational leadership from Coastal Carolina University.

Addenda

Student Performance Data

Section I: Percentage 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)

Grade	2017-2018				2016-2017				2015-2016			
	ELA School	ELA State	Math School	Math State	ELA School	ELA State	Math School	Math State	ELA School	ELA State	Math School	Math State
6	7.8	39.9	10.3	42.6	9.5	39.7	7.5	41.5	14.1	41.0	7.5	39.5
7	8.4	40.1	5.0	34.9	8.2	36.4	2.9	33.3	17.1	40.7	12.8	34.7
8	5.4	39.2	1.5	36.6	13.2	40.1	5.4	34.5	17.4	44.7	6.8	32.4

Section II: 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 6			Grade 7			Grade 8		
	2018	2017	2016	2018	2017	2016	2018	2017	2016
Science	8.2	8.5	25.3		16.8	44.2	8.3	18.6	38.0
State Avg. Science	47.7	48.0	62.1		46.5	70.6	48.7	49.5	66.2
Social Studies		32.3	38.1	34.8	26.9	48.3		41.6	48.6
State Avg. SS		73.3	76.3	66.4	63.5	68.4		67.7	69.5

Schedule

Sunday, April 14, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #1	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:30 p.m.– 5:15 p.m.	Principal Presentation	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Monday, April 15, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
7:30 a.m.	Team arrives at Morningside	School Office	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Classroom Observations & Stakeholder Interviews	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #2	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
7:30 a.m.	Team arrives at Morningside	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Interviews, Artifacts Review, Classroom Observations	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #3	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
7:30 a.m.	Team arrives at Morningside	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Final Team Work Session	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members



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