

April 28–May 1, 2019



AdvancED® Engagement Review Report



AdvancED® Diagnostic Review

Results for: Southside 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	1
Building-level Administrators	4
Professional Support Staff (e.g., Counselor, Media Specialist, Technology Coordinator)	2
Certified Staff	16
Non-certified Staff	16
Students	11
Parents	3
Total	53

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.	Emerging
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.	Emerging
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.	Emerging
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.

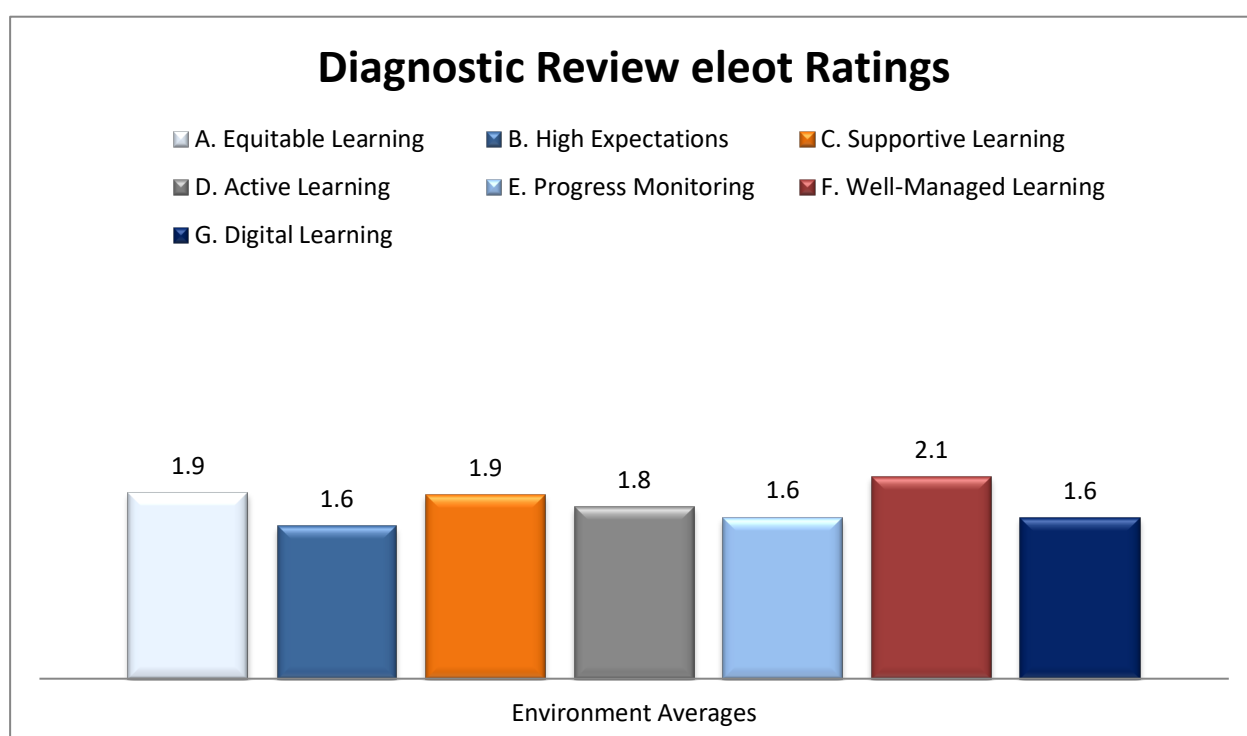
Resource Capacity Standards		Rating
3.1	The institution plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the institution's effectiveness.	Needs Improvement
3.2	The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration 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 34 observations during the Diagnostic Review process, including all core content learning environments. The following charts provide aggregate data across multiple observations



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.	59%	24%	18%	0%
A2	2.1	Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support.	26%	41%	32%	0%
A3	2.3	Learners are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner.	24%	24%	50%	3%
A4	1.6	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.	59%	26%	12%	3%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:			1.9			

B. High Expectations Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
B1	1.6	Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher.	62%	21%	18%	0%
B2	1.6	Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable.	56%	24%	21%	0%
B3	1.3	Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work.	74%	24%	3%	0%
B4	1.6	Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing).	53%	35%	12%	0%
B5	1.7	Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning.	47%	38%	15%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:			1.6			

C. Supportive Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
C1	1.9	Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful.	44%	26%	29%	0%
C2	1.8	Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback).	50%	24%	24%	3%
C3	1.9	Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks.	38%	35%	26%	0%
C4	1.9	Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher.	41%	24%	35%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:			1.9			

D. Active Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
D1	1.6	Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and teacher predominate.	50%	35%	15%	0%
D2	1.6	Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences.	50%	35%	15%	0%
D3	2.1	Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities.	32%	29%	38%	0%
D4	1.6	Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments.	59%	18%	24%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:			1.8			

E. Progress Monitoring & Feedback Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
E1	1.5	Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored.	59%	29%	12%	0%
E2	1.8	Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work.	44%	32%	24%	0%
E3	1.8	Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content.	38%	41%	21%	0%
E4	1.4	Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed.	74%	12%	15%	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	2.1	Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other.	26%	32%	41%	0%
F2	2.1	Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others.	32%	24%	44%	0%
F3	1.9	Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another.	44%	24%	32%	0%
F4	2.1	Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions.	35%	24%	41%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:			2.1			

G. Digital Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
G1	1.9	Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning.	47%	18%	29%	6%
G2	1.5	Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning.	68%	12%	21%	0%
G3	1.4	Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning.	71%	15%	15%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:		1.6				

eleot Narrative

The Diagnostic Review Team conducted 34 classroom observations in core content classrooms. The Well-Managed Learning Environment had the highest overall rating of 2.1 on a four-point scale. The Diagnostic Review Team noted that students were generally well-behaved and followed classroom rules. For example, it was evident/very evident in 44 percent of classrooms that students “demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others” (F2). Also, it was evident/very evident in 41 percent of classrooms that students “use class time purposefully” in relation to the teachers’ expectations (F4). These two practices in the Well-Managed Learning Environment could serve as leverage points for the school to maximize class time. In addition, it was evident/very evident in 53 percent of classrooms that students “are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner” (A3).

Practices in the High Expectations Learning Environment scored low. In three percent of classrooms, for example, it was evident/very evident that students “demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work” (B3). In addition, it was evident/very evident in 18 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 21 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students “engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable” (B2). It was evident/very evident in 12 percent of classrooms that students “engage in rigorous coursework . . . that require the use of higher order thinking” (B4) and in 15 percent of classrooms that students “take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning” (B5).

The team was also concerned with the Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment. Instances of students who “monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning is monitored” (E1) were evident/very evident in 12 percent of classrooms. Also concerning was the lack of opportunities that students were given to “receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work” (E2), which was evident/very evident in 24 percent of classrooms. It was evident/very evident that students “demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content” (E3) in 21 percent of classrooms and “are able to explain how their work is assessed” (E4) in 15 percent of classrooms.

The low scores in the Digital Learning Environment also emerged as an area in need of improvement. For example, it was evident/very evident that learners used digital tools/technology “to conduct research, solve problems,

and/or create original works for learning” (G2) in 21 percent of classrooms and “to communicate and work collaboratively for learning” (G3) in 15 percent of classrooms. Also, it was evident/very evident in 35 percent of classrooms that students used “digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning” (G1). However, students primarily took notes and answered questions from PowerPoint presentations. Collectively, these findings, along with the knowledge that the school had a one-to-one technology initiative, illuminated an opportunity to increase student motivation to want to learn.

In summation, structures existed that could serve as the foundation for increasing engagement and promoting learning for students. The team suggested that the school leverage those structures to increase the learning expectations for students and to provide classroom instruction aligned with the level of rigor included in the state standards and performance levels on state assessments.

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 and implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning. Include the creation and implementation of a plan that will provide regular and consistent analysis of student data by grade level and departmental teams. Use data to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate continuous improvement plans in order to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and organizational conditions. (Standard 1.3)

Evidence:

Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in an addendum of this report, suggested that instructional processes for supporting student learning and improving the success of all students at all levels were not developed. Students performed below the state averages for three consecutive years in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for grades seven and eight on the South Carolina College-and Career-Ready (SC READY). The percentages of students who met or exceeded benchmarks on the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) were also below the state averages in science for grade eight in 2018, 2017, and 2016 and in social studies at grade seven in 2018, 2017, and 2016.

Evidence supported that progress monitoring started with the release of the data on the 2018 School Report Card; however, beyond analyzing multiple pieces of assessment data, evidence did not support that data were used consistently to provide instructional change in every classroom.

Classroom Observation Data:

The classroom observation data, as previously discussed, suggested that the school did not systematically implement a continuous improvement process that clearly informed the faculty of expectations and standards of performance and about the designation of the Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school status. The observation data revealed that instances of learners who “are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher” (B1) were evident/very evident in 18 percent of classrooms.

Stakeholder Interview Data:

The stakeholder interview data showed that many interviewees were unable to share specifics about the school’s mission and vision statements other than acknowledging that they existed. The Diagnostic Review Team was not given a complete draft of the School Renewal Plan (SRP) or a plan that focused on continuous improvement. The existing SRP included goals that addressed improving ELA performance; however, the strategies and action steps were all related to mathematics.

Parents communicated that they were happy with the school and its current leadership; however, they indicated little understanding of the School Report Card. Overall, all interview groups could not communicate the status of the school and did not understand the purpose of the Diagnostic Review Team visit. Some teachers communicated that they heard the team was here because “The principal forgot to complete some survey.”

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

The survey data revealed that 86 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school has a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions, and measures for growth” (C5). Sixty-six percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school ensures that all staff members monitor and report the achievement of school goals” (G1). The survey data revealed that 62 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “In my school, the purpose and expectations are clearly explained to me and my family” (C2). The survey data also revealed that 84 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school's leaders ensure all staff members use supervisory feedback to improve student learning” (D8); however, the Diagnostic Review Team found no evidence that feedback was used for the purpose of driving instruction.

The survey data indicated that parents, staff, and students agreed that parents were not kept up-to-date on student progress. For example, 63 percent of parents (E8), 76 percent of staff members (E19), and 54 percent of students (E13) agreed/strongly agreed that the school regularly engaged families in their student’s learning progress. Data from the interviews with staff members and leadership indicated that students were able to monitor their learning through Google Classroom; however, this application was recently implemented and primarily used for students to complete traditional note-taking assignments through viewing online PowerPoint presentations.

Documents and Artifacts:

The Diagnostic Review Team was unable to evaluate the School Quality Factors (SQF) diagnostic report and supporting documents, as they were not complete at the time of the team’s visit. After several requests, the team was given the recently developed School Renewal Plan (SRP). Although the SRP included goals, strategies, and action steps, these components did not always align. For example, the school had a goal for increasing ELA performance, but the corresponding strategies and action steps were related to improving student learning in mathematics. The principal began sharing documents with the Diagnostic Review Team through Google Drive once the onsite Diagnostic Review commenced. These documents included items related to various departmental meetings, lesson plan checks completed by the department chairs, professional development data analysis agendas for using data to create a Student Learning Objective (SLO), and samples of lesson plans.

Improvement Priority #2

Design, implement, monitor, and evaluate a systematic and sustainable instructional process that does the following: (1) ensures the use of research-based instructional practices that prompt and support active learning, (2) is responsive to individual student needs, (3) clearly informs students of learning expectations and standards of performance, and (4) integrates frequent checks for understanding and specific and timely feedback to students. (Standard 2.7)

Evidence:**Student Performance Data:**

The student performance data, as detailed in an addendum of this report, suggested that the school did not establish instructional processes that significantly and systematically improved student learning. Students performed below the state averages for three consecutive years in ELA and mathematics in grades seven and eight on the South Carolina College-and Career-Ready (SC READY). The student performance data were among those data examined to identify Improvement Priority #2.

Classroom Observation Data:

The classroom observation data revealed that most classroom instruction was focused on students being compliant and was not planned for producing high-level, thought-provoking student engagement. Instances of students who “strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher” (B1) were evident/very evident in 18 percent of classrooms. It was evident/very evident in 21 percent of classrooms that students “engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable” (B2) and in three percent of classrooms that learners “demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work” (B3). It was evident/very evident in 12 percent of classrooms that students “engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)” (B4). It was evident/very evident in 18 percent of classrooms that students “engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs” (A1).

Stakeholder Interview Data:

The interview data revealed that no expectation was clearly communicated to teachers detailing how to plan for quality instruction. Teachers shared that they had been required since February 2019 to place their daily instructional agenda on the board for students to see; however, not all agendas included the same basic information, and observations revealed that not all agendas were up-to-date. The interview data suggested a need for established meeting protocols. The data also indicated that student information was collected to personalize student learning through the use of assessments; however, the team found a lack of expectations and the absence of a process to ensure the information was used to make adjustments for learning. Administrators and teachers shared that LinkIt data were analyzed; however, the data were not used to make daily instructional decisions or to inform comprehensive instructional decisions for the school. Leadership team members shared that each department or content area used different data sources, processes of analysis, and lesson planning. The interview data suggested that instructional leadership responsibilities were delegated to the department or content area lead teachers. The team, through interviews of multiple stakeholder groups, found that the principal had not accepted responsibility to become the instructional leader of the school.

The principal shared that “There are no data protocols” in place at this time and that LinkIt data currently were the predominate data examined. Additionally, the principal reported that he “Hoped [LinkIt data] is aligned” to the state assessment. When asked why student performance was not improving, stakeholders provided a plethora of reasons including, “We are not being supported by our district office,” “Students do not understand the

importance of the tests,” “Parents are not concerned about state testing,” and other similar statements. One staff member’s comments summed up the sentiment of many: “Sometimes we need to be uncomfortable. There has been some real comfort over the years. We have been lackadaisical, and we need to get out of our comfort zones. Students’ tests and grades say As, but LinkIt doesn’t, so we need to take a look at it.”

When asked about instructional practices, students and parents were limited in their ability to provide specific information about what and how the content was taught. Moreover, the student interview data were mixed about the quality of learning and support they received in their classes. Collectively, the data showed that students who enrolled in advanced classes received feedback and support throughout the learning process while students in the academic classes received less feedback and support.

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

The survey data revealed that stakeholders had little knowledge about the instructional planning process at the school. While 81 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 examination of professional practice” (E1), 65 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that “All of my child’s teachers provide an equitable curriculum that meets his/her learning needs” (E1). Although 78 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), 34 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs” (E9). Parent responses were more in line with students, as 46 percent agreed/strongly agreed that “All of my child’s teachers meet his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction” (E4).

The student survey data revealed that 68 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “My school provides me with challenging curriculum and learning experiences” (E2). Similarly, the classroom observation data showed instructional delivery was primarily teacher-led. When students were offered the opportunity to participate, their responses and/or application were at a DOK 1 level. Although the student survey and classroom observation data collectively showed a lack of high-level learning opportunities and expectations for students, the survey data revealed 85 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school’s leaders expect staff members to hold all students to high academic standards” (C4).

Documents and Artifacts:

A review of documents and artifacts provided by Southside Middle School revealed limited evidence of a common instructional process that was responsive to individual student needs, clearly informed students of learning expectations and standards of performance, and integrated frequent checks for understanding and specific and timely feedback to students. The team found a lack of evidence that a clear process was developed for monitoring instruction to ensure high quality teaching that met individual student needs.

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:

The current principal has been at Southside Middle School for 13 years. It was evident that he worked to build positive relationships with the community during his tenure at the school. Through his leadership, the administration and faculty demonstrated that they cared about their students. The principal also provided students with numerous electives and opportunities to be involved in the school.

The principal established structures for staff and students to promote learning and build collaborative relationships. The existing schedule included two planning periods per day for the purpose of having teachers use one of those periods to provide intervention or extended learning time for students.

Continuous Improvement Process:

The interview and survey data and review of documents and artifacts indicated that teachers and leaders inconsistently engaged in continuous improvement and decision-making processes to build instructional and organizational capacity. The leadership team did not attempt to collect and organize data, documents, or artifacts as a way to conduct a reflective internal review of the current reality of the school or in preparation for the Diagnostic Review process. The existing School Renewal Plan was disjointed and included strategies that were not aligned to goals. An ongoing and effective use of data to drive decision-making by teachers and leaders was not evident in practices or processes. Although students were continually assessed and teachers had multiple sources of data to analyze, school leadership had no expectation that findings from data analysis would be translated into instruction practices. A continuous improvement focus or process was not established.

While the school had structures (e.g., faculty, departmental, and content area meetings) that provided time for teachers to collaboratively learn and plan, teachers and school leadership rarely used data to drive instructional decisions. The classroom observation and interview data confirmed that students had few opportunities to engage in personalized or differentiated learning tasks. While some research-based instructional strategies were used in some classrooms, implementation was inconsistent across the school. When asked about the expectation of using data to plan for and deliver differentiated instruction, teachers were able to discuss the process of analyzing data; however, most fell short in explaining how findings changed instructional practices. The interview data also suggested that an expectation existed for data to inform daily instructional practice, but the practice was not formally monitored or used specifically to determine how or when the practices were implemented.

The interview data indicated that teachers were only recently introduced to informal classroom observations by their peers and administrators. Collectively, the data showed that, in essence, teachers functioned as individual islands rather than a community of professionals who used evidence-based best practices to provide quality instruction for all students. Evidence revealed that school leaders rarely conducted classroom walkthroughs or observations, beyond the required evaluation process, to provide teachers with nonevaluative feedback in order to improve instructional practices. Evidence indicated that feedback to teachers, when provided, typically consisted of generic phrases (e.g., good job) rather than constructive and meaningful directions.

Overall, effective, results-driven, and continuous improvement planning processes with systems, programs, and practices were not established or used to monitor individual student achievement. Further, the school did not routinely use data to evaluate program effectiveness or monitor the impact of specific strategies. At the school level, professional learning rarely occurred beyond an external consultant providing professional development on data analysis. The team suggests the school use performance benchmarks and measures to monitor and determine its ability to meet improvement goals. School leaders created structures to provide ongoing opportunities for data-driven collaborative work to occur, such as departmental and content area meetings. These structures could be leveraged if data-driven processes and procedures were uniformly developed, implemented, and monitored.

To continue growth toward proficiency and create opportunities for school improvement, teachers and leaders would benefit from intentional coaching and mentoring designed to maximize the implementation of high-yield instructional practices. Additional support for classroom teachers to effectively analyze data to differentiate instruction could be a lever for improvement. Further, teaching and learning could be leveraged by systematically infusing higher levels of thinking, problem-solving, and creativity into instruction and student learning tasks. Finally, the Diagnostic Review Team suggests that school leadership and staff members collectively embrace and consistently use a research-based instructional walkthrough process that provides teachers with authentic feedback focused on high-yield instructional strategies to improve instructional practices both school-wide and individually.

Student performance consistently declined over the past three years on state assessments, yet faculty and staff members reported being surprised when the school appeared on the state list for improvement. To address the designation of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) status, the school focused on external barriers rather than addressing internal factors under the school's control and creating a sense of urgency through continuous improvement planning and instructional practices. A concerted effort to develop, implement, and monitor uniform expectations for all stakeholders could create a culture of academic excellence within the school.

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
Kellie Yeager	Mrs. Kellie Yeager has over 34 years of experience as a teacher, district specialist, and Alabama Department of Education School Improvement Specialist. She served as the assessment and accountability coordinator for the Jefferson County District in Birmingham, Alabama, until her retirement. In that position, she coordinated the assessment implementation process, accountability tracking, and school improvement activities for 56 schools. Mrs. Yeager holds a degree in health, physical education, recreation, and dance with a minor in biology from the University of Alabama. Mrs. Yeager also has experiences as an instructional coach for grades K-12, a school improvement coach with the Alabama Department of Education, and a Regional School Improvement Field Coordinator with the Alabama Department of Education.
Senaca Baines	Mr. Senaca Baines has 19 years of experience as a teacher and administrator. He is currently the assistant principal at Ridgeland Hardeeville High School in Jasper County School District in Ridgeland, South Carolina. In that position, he coordinates the curriculum implementation process, teacher evaluation, student discipline, and professional development activities. Mr. Baines holds a master's degree plus 30 in organizational leadership with a focus on school reform from Grand Canyon University. Mr. Baines is endorsed as a Transformational Leader via his completion of the South Carolina Transformation Leadership Academy. He also has bachelor's degrees in political science and anthropology. Mr. Baines also has experience as a middle school and high school principal for the last 12 years.
Andress Carter-Sims	Mrs. Andress Carter-Sims received a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies with an emphasis in early childhood education and a master's in environmental science from the University of South Carolina. Her graduate studies also included an education specialist degree from Cambridge College in curriculum and instruction. During her 28 years in education, Mrs. Carter-Sims has had the opportunity to serve as a classroom teacher and district-level consultant for science, mathematics, and technology. She has also served as a Title I coordinator, providing professional development for instructional assistants, teachers, and principals. In addition to serving in consultant roles, she has served as a director for school improvement, assistant principal, and principal. Currently, she serves as the School Improvement Program Manager at the South Carolina Department of Education.

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Brent Chavous	Mr. Brent Chavous has over 15 years of experience as a teacher and administrator. He is currently an assistant principal and athletic coordinator for South Middle School in Lancaster County School District in Lancaster, South Carolina, which has been recognized as South Carolina's Schools to Watch Re-designation II (2019). Currently, he supervises students and staff, coordinates professional development for staff members, manages instructional resources, coordinates transportation, manages facilities, handles student discipline issues, leads the effort to reduce truancy, and ensures that all students have an excellent education program. Mr. Chavous holds a master's degree in education administration from the University of South Carolina. He also has a bachelor's degree in biological sciences from Hampton University. Mr. Chavous has attended and presented at education conferences locally, regionally, and nationally.
Charrai Hunter	Mrs. Charrai Hunter has over 14 years of experience as an educator. She is currently a Transformation Coach for the South Carolina (SC) Department of Education in Columbia. In this role, she supports leaders and educators in the process of continuous school improvement. This role includes providing support in the areas of principal and leadership, instructional support, and professional learning and efficacy in public schools in South Carolina. Prior to her current role, Mrs. Hunter served as a Multi-Tier System of Support Coach in North Carolina and as a secondary curriculum consultant in South Carolina. In these roles, she has supported schools in designing, implementing, and monitoring effectiveness of school change initiatives, assisted schools with procedures and protocols to analyze student data and implementation fidelity data, and facilitated problem-solving around data. She has also provided various professional learning opportunities centered on standards-based instruction, assessment, and progress monitoring. Mrs. Hunter received her bachelor's degree in English education from Livingstone College, her master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Central Michigan University, and her educational leadership certification from Johns Hopkins University.
Dr. Shannon Stanley	Dr. Stanley has served over 25 years as a teacher, administrator, and superintendent. She is currently in her third year as superintendent of Boaz City Schools and also serves as an adjunct professor in teacher leadership for Jacksonville State University and facilitator for the University of Alabama Superintendent's Academy. Dr. Stanley holds a doctorate in instructional leadership from the University of Alabama. She also has an education specialist's degree in instructional leadership and a master's degree and bachelor's degree in early childhood and elementary education. Dr. Stanley has also served as deputy superintendent for teaching and learning, assistant superintendent of K-8 instruction, principal, assistant principal, and classroom teacher.

Addenda

Student Performance Data

Section I: 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	80.9	60.5	98.3	75.1	100	82.4
English I	92.7	53.9	98.8	77.0	98.5	78.9
Biology	N/A	59.5	N/A	73.8	N/A	75.9
U.S. History	N/A	48.9	N/A	67.9	N/A	71.2

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	27.6	40.1	21.5	34.9	24.6	36.4	17.8	33.3	31.9	40.7	26.5	34.7
8	29.8	39.2	16.8	36.6	32	40.1	32.1	34.5	33.2	44.7	25.8	32.4

Section III: 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		37.8	70.3	39	46.6	60.4
State Avg. Science		46.5	70.6	48.7	49.5	66.2
Social Studies	54.7	46.8	66.2		75.4	75.4
State Avg. Social Studies	66.4	63.5	68.4		67.7	69.5

Schedule

Date: April 28, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
4:00 p.m.	Brief Team Meeting	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:30 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.	Principal Presentation	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members
5:15 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #1	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Date: April 29, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
8:00 a.m.	Team arrives at Southside Middle School	School Office	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:25 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Interviews / Classroom Observations / Stakeholder Interviews / Artifact Review	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #2	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Date: April 30, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
8:00 a.m.	Team arrives at Southside Middle School	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:25 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Interviews / Classroom Observations / Stakeholder Interviews / Artifact Review	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #3	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Date: May 1, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Final Team Work Session	Hotel (school cancelled due to no water)	Diagnostic Review Team Members



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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.

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