DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW REPORT FOR ROBERT E. HOWARD MIDDLE SCHOOL

1255 Belleville Road
Orangeburg, SC
29115-3611

Eric Brown
Principal

April 12, 2016 – April 15, 2016

Copyright ©2016 by Advance Education, Inc. AdvancED® grants to the Institution, which is the subject of the Diagnostic Review Report, and its designees and stakeholders a non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free license and release to reproduce, reprint, and distribute this report in accordance with and as protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States of America and all foreign countries. All other rights not expressly conveyed are reserved by AdvancED.

Table of Contents

Introduction 4
Results 8
Teaching and Learning Impact 8
Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning 10
Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement 11
Student Performance Diagnostic 11
Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) 11
eleot™ Summary 12
eleot Analysis™ by Learning Environment 13
Findings 20
Leadership Capacity 24
Standard 1 Purpose and Direction 25
Standard 2 Governance and Leadership 25
Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic 26
Findings 27
Resouce Utilization 29
Standard 4 Resource and Support System 29
Conclusion 31
Team Roster 34
About AdvancED 36
References 37
Student Performance Data Tables 39
Stakeholder Survey Plus/Delta 41
Diagnostic Review Team Schedule 44

Introduction

The Diagnostic Review is carried out by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the research aligned 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 groups, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

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 at their disposal, the Diagnostic Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report.

Standards help to 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 comprised of talented educators and leaders from the fields of practice, research and policy who 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. Prior to implementation, an internationally recognized panel of experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality and education research reviewed the standards and provided feedback, guidance and endorsement.

The AdvancED Diagnostic Review Team uses AdvancED Standards, associated Indicators and criteria related to student performance and stakeholder engagement to guide its evaluation. The Standards, Indicators and related criteria are evaluated using Indicator-specific performance levels. The Team rates each Indicator and criterion on a scale of 1 to 4. The final scores assigned to the Indicators and criteria represent the average of the Diagnostic Review Team members' individual ratings.

© 2016 AdvancED

Use of Diagnostic Tools

A key to examining the institution is the design and use of diagnostic tools that reveal the effectiveness with which an institution creates conditions and implements processes and practices that impact student performance and success. In preparation for the Diagnostic Review, the institution conducted a Self Assessment using the AdvancED Standards and provided evidence to support its conclusions vis a vis organizational effectiveness in ensuring acceptable and improving levels of student performance.

- An indicator-based tool that connects the specific elements of the criteria to evidence gathered by the team;
- a student performance analytic that examines the quality of assessment instruments used by the institution, the integrity of the administration of the assessment to students, the quality of the learning results including the impact of instruction on student learning at all levels of performance, and the equity of learning that examines the results of student learning across all demographics;
- a stakeholder engagement instrument that examines the fidelity of administration and results of perception surveys seeking the perspective of students, parents, and teachers;
- a state-of-the-art, learner-centric observation instrument, the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) that quantifies students' engagement, attitudes and dispositions organized in 7 environments: Equitable Learning, High Expectations, Supportive Learning, Active Learning, Progress Monitoring and Feedback, Well-Managed Learning, and Digital Learning. All evaluators must be trained, reach acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability, and certified to use this research-based and validated instrument.

The Diagnostic Review Team's findings and critical observations are shared in this report through the Indicator ratings, identification of Powerful Practices and Improvement Priorities.

Powerful Practices

A key to continuous improvement is the institution's knowledge of its most effective and impactful practices. Such practices, yielding a performance level of 4, serve as critical leverage points necessary to guide, support and ensure continuous improvement. The Diagnostic Review process is committed to identifying conditions, processes and practices that are having the most significant impact on student performance and institutional effectiveness. The Diagnostic Review Team has captured and defined Powerful Practices which identified as essential to the institution's effort to continue its journey of improvement.

Improvement Priorities

The Diagnostic Review Team reviewed, analyzed and deliberated over significant bodies of evidence provided by the institution and gathered by the team during the process. For those instances in which this analysis yielded a Level 1 or Level 2 Indicator rating, an Improvement Priority may be identified by the Team to guide improvement efforts. Improvement Priorities are supported by extensive

explanation and rationale to give leaders and stakeholders a clear understanding of the conditions, practices, policies, etc., revealed through the Diagnostic Review process. Improvement Priorities are intended to be incorporated into the institution's improvement plan.

The Review

Robert E. Howard Middle School hosted a Diagnostic Review on April 12-15, 2016. The on-site review involved a six-member team who provided its knowledge, skills and expertise for carrying out the Diagnostic Review process and developing this written report of their findings.

The Diagnostic Review Team expresses its appreciation to the staff and stakeholders of Robert E. Howard Middle School for the overwhelmingly warm welcome throughout the visit. The school is commended for their graciousness, extreme cooperativeness, willingness to promptly respond to the Team's varied requests and support of the process.

Prior to the start of the Diagnostic Review, the Team engaged in conference calls and various communications through emails to complete the initial intensive study, review and analysis of various documents provided by the school. The Lead Evaluator conducted conference calls with the key leaders of the school. School leaders thoughtfully planned and conducted the Internal Review, taking into consideration the need for openness and transparency. The comprehensive Internal Review engaged a range of stakeholder groups. The report was completed and submitted for review by the Diagnostic Review Team just prior to the visit. Most evidence and documentation to support the school's Self Assessment and other diagnostics were provided in three-ring binders and placed in the Team's designated meeting room. Information not provided in the binders was submitted to the Team upon request, but some information provided by the school was incomplete.

Team Members arrived in Orangeburg, South Carolina on Tuesday, April 12, 2016, to meet and prepare for the work to be done the following day. The Team engaged in a preliminary review of data and information provided by the school, considered issues to be addressed, reviewed individual Team Member schedules and prepared for interviews. The principal and leadership team presented an overview of the school's purpose and direction, what they perceived as strengths and weaknesses, initiatives they had implemented in the 2015-2016 school year and plans for the future.

The three days of on-site work for the Team began on Wednesday, April 13, 2016. Team Members interviewed administrators, students, parents, instructional staff and support staff. Observations were also conducted by the Diagnostic Review Team using the eleot™ classroom observation tool. The Team reviewed artifacts and evidence provided by the school. In addition, the Team met on the evenings of Wednesday, April 13 and Thursday, April 14 to discuss interview data, additional evidence, identify Improvement Priorities and discuss ratings for each of the Indicators.

Stakeholder interviews were conducted to gain information regarding issues relevant to the school's effectiveness and student performance. Interview data were considered along with the additional evidence and data to support the findings of the Diagnostic Review. A total of 44 stakeholders were interviewed, and 14 classrooms were observed during the Diagnostic Review. Throughout the Diagnostic Review school leaders, faculty and staff were completely honest in their discussions about the continuous improvement processes and their concerns related to student performance data.

The following table shows the number of people interviewed.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Administrators	2
Instructional Staff	13
Support Staff	9
Students	10
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	10
TOTAL	44

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED Diagnostic Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Results, Conclusion and Addenda.

Results

Teaching and Learning Impact

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement is the primary expectation of every institution. The relationship between teacher and learner must be productive and effective for student success. The impact of teaching and learning includes an analysis of student performance results, instructional quality, learner and family engagement, support services for student learning, curriculum quality and efficacy, and college and career readiness data. These are all key indicators of an institution's impact on teaching and learning.

A high-quality and effective educational institution has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve to their highest potential and be prepared for a successful future. The positive influence an effective educator has on learning is a combination of "student motivation, parental involvement" and the "quality of leadership" (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Research also suggests that quality educators must have a variety of quantifiable and intangible characteristics that include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The institution's curriculum and instructional program should develop learners' skills that lead them to think about the world in complex ways (Conley, 2007) and prepare them to have knowledge that extends beyond the academic areas. In order to achieve these goals, teachers must have pedagogical skills as well as content knowledge (Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y., 2010). The acquisition and refinement of teachers' pedagogical skills occur most effectively through collaboration and professional development. These are a "necessary approach to improving teacher quality" (Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S., 2008). According to Marks, Louis, and Printy (2002), staff members who engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective institutions "supports teachers by creating collaborative work environments." Institutional leaders have a responsibility to provide experiences, resources, and time for educators to engage in meaningful professional learning that promotes student learning and educator quality.

AdvancED has found that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning. The curriculum provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Institutions with strong improvement processes move beyond anxiety about the current reality and focus on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, i.e., data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, and Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide

improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R., 2005). The study also identified six key strategies that performance-driven systems use: (1) building a foundation for data-driven decision making, (2) establishing a culture of data use and continuous improvement, (3) investing in an information management system, (4) selecting the right data, (5) building institutional capacity for data-driven decision making, and (6) analyzing and acting on data to improve performance. Other research studies, though largely without comparison groups, suggested that data-driven decision-making has the potential to increase student performance (Alwin, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Lafee, 2002; McIntire, 2002).

Through ongoing evaluation of educational institutions, AdvancED has found that a successful institution uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine strategies to improve student performance. The institution implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the institution with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained, and the institution demonstrates progress in improving student performance and institution effectiveness.

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

The institution's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
3.1	The school's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	2.00
3.2	Curriculum, instruction and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	2.00
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.00
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.00
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	2.00
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.00
3.7	Mentoring, coaching and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.50
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	2.33
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	2.00
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	2.67
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.00
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	2.00

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The institution implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	2.50
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation and organizational conditions.	2.00
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation and use of data.	2.00
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness and success at the next level.	2.00
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	2.00

Student Performance Diagnostic

The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Average Team Rating
1. Assessment Quality	2.00
2. Test Administration	3.00
3. Quality of Learning	2.00
4. Equity of Learning	NA*

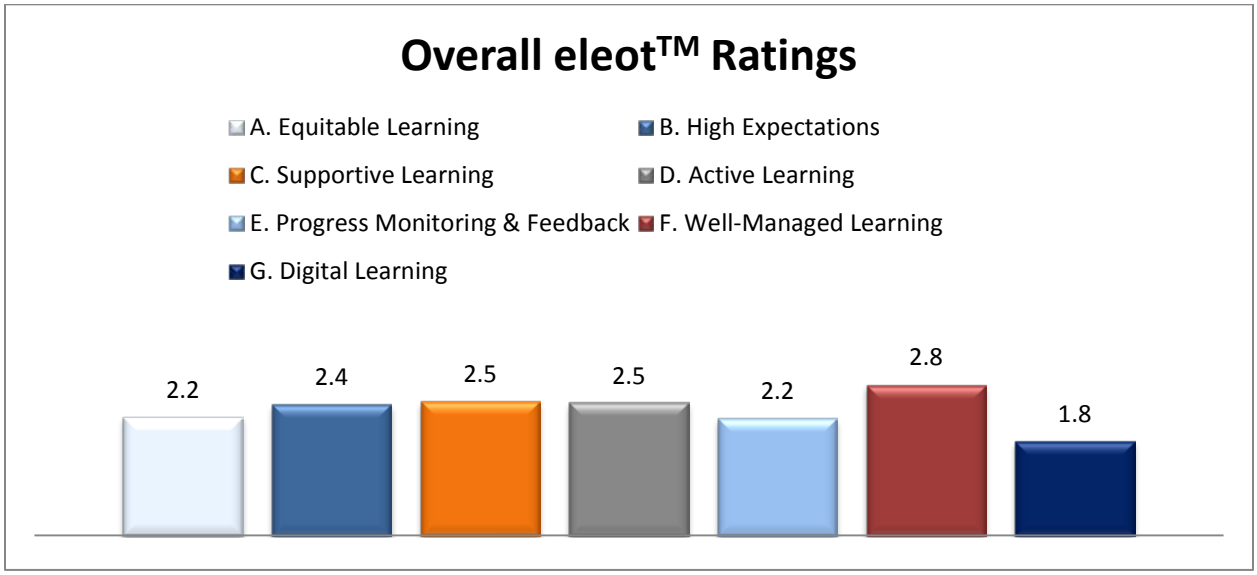
** The only subgroup that existed was males and females. The achievement gap between this subgroup was so small that it would be considered statistically insignificant to warrant a valid rating.*

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

Every learner should have access to an effective learning environment in which she/he has multiple opportunities to be successful. The Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and well-managed. An environment where high expectations are the norm and active learning takes place. It

measures whether learners' progress is monitored and feedback is provided and the extent to which technology is leveraged for learning.

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. Every member of the Diagnostic Review Team is required to be trained and pass a certification exam that establishes inter-rater reliability. Team members conduct multiple observation during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale (4=every evident; 3-evident; 2=somewhat evident; and 1=not observed). The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in eleot™ .



eleot™ Summary Statement

During the review, Team Members conducted eleot™ observations in all 14 core content classrooms. As indicated on the chart above, the Well-Managed Learning Environment received the highest overall rating of 2.8 on a four-point scale. The Supportive Learning Environment and the Active Learning Environment tied for the second-highest rating of 2.5 on a four-point scale. High Expectations Learning Environment rated a 2.4 on a four-point scale. Equitable Learning and Progress Monitoring & Feedback were close behind with a rating of 2.2 on a four-point scale, each. The Digital Learning Environment received a rating of 1.8 on a four-point scale, which was the lowest-rated Learning Environment.

Observations revealed the existence of effective Learning Environments was present in the school but only in a few classrooms. Results from eleot observations showed that no learning environment was rated higher than a 2.8 on a four-point scale. The lowest individual Team ratings regarded classroom instruction. Data indicated the Team infrequently observed opportunities for students to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences and for making connections from content to real-life experiences. Students seldom were provided feedback or given opportunities to revise work based on feedback. The use of exemplars (e.g., rubrics, models, completed work) was virtually non-

existent. Although students were grouped together in most classrooms, collaborative work and peer discussions were not taking place. There was little evidence of student use of technology in the regular classroom setting.

Students and teachers were consistently respectful towards each other. Students generally adhered to classroom rules and demonstrated positive attitudes towards learning in classrooms that were well-managed.

eleot™ Analysis by Learning Environment

A. Equitable Learning Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
A.1	**2.2**	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	14%	21%	36%	29%
A.2	**2.7**	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	21%	50%	7%	21%
A.3	**2.6**	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	14%	43%	36%	7%
A.4	**1.3**	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	0%	7%	14%	79%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.2**				

Equitable Learning Environment

The overall rating for the Equitable Learning Environment was 2.2 on a four-point scale. It was evident/very evident in 71 percent of the classrooms that students had "equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support" (A2). It was evident/very evident in 57 percent of the classrooms that students knew "rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied" (A3). It was evident/very evident in only seven percent of the classrooms that students had "ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences" (A4). It was evident/very evident in 35 percent of the classrooms that students had "differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs" (A1). Teachers primarily used direct instruction. Missed opportunities for individualized learning to increase student performance were noted by Team Members. Providing staff with professional development opportunities to establish an equitable and differentiated learning environment could improve the learning of all students, create a supportive learning environment and prepare teachers to understand and appreciate all students.

B. High Expectations Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
B.1	**2.5**	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	0%	50%	50%	0%
B.2	**2.5**	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	0%	57%	36%	7%
B.3	**2.3**	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	21%	21%	21%	36%
B.4	**2.4**	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	14%	36%	29%	21%
B.5	**2.5**	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	14%	36%	36%	14%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.4**				

High Expectations Environment

The overall rating for the High Expectations Learning Environment was 2.4 on a four-point scale. Students who demonstrated they knew and strived "to meet the high expectations established by the teacher" (B1) were evident/very evident in 50 percent of the classrooms. In 57 percent of the classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students were "tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (B2). It was also evident/very evident in 42 percent of the classrooms that teachers provided "exemplars of high quality work" (B3) to students. Furthermore, it was evident/very evident in 50 percent of the classrooms that teachers provided students with the opportunity to engage in "rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks" (B4), and evident/very evident in 50 percent of the classrooms that students were able to apply, evaluate, and synthesize the work being required of them (B5). These percentages indicated that increasing rigor and raising student academic expectations could serve as significant areas to leverage and increase student learning.

C. Supporting Learning Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
C.1	**2.6**	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	7%	50%	36%	7%
C.2	**2.6**	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	7%	57%	29%	7%
C.3	**2.6**	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	7%	57%	21%	14%
C.4	**2.5**	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	14%	21%	64%	0%
C.5	**2.2**	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	0%	43%	36%	21%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.5**				

Supportive Learning Environment

The Supportive Learning Environment received an overall rating of 2.5 on a four-point scale. Observers noted a strength in this Learning Environment was the "positive attitude about the classroom and learning," (C2). This item received one of the highest ratings and was evident/very evident in 64 percent of the classrooms. In 64 percent of the classrooms, it was evident/very evident students took "risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)" (C3). In 57 percent of the classrooms, observations showed it was evident/very evident that students had a positive attitude toward learning experiences (C1). It was evident/very evident in 43 percent of the classrooms that students were "provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs," (C5). Thirty-five percent of classrooms demonstrated evidence that students were provided "support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks" (C4). In some classrooms, students were working in small groups, but there was little discussion among learners and few instances of individualized instruction. These data revealed areas to leverage for improvement by providing additional opportunities for student collaboration (e.g., think-pair-share), which may help students understand and retain material while developing their communication skills and realizing their peers can be used as learning resources.

D. Active Learning Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
D.1	**2.5**	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	14%	36%	36%	14%
D.2	**2.0**	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	14%	21%	14%	50%
D.3	**2.9**	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	29%	36%	36%	0%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.5**				

Active Learning Environment

The Active Learning Environment received an overall rating of 2.5 on a four-point scale. It was evident/very evident in 65 percent of the classrooms that students were "actively engaged in the learning activities," (D3). This item received the highest rating of 2.9, which exceeded the overall rating of 2.5. It was evident/very evident in 50 percent of the classrooms that students were provided "several opportunities to engage in discussions with teachers and other students," (D1); however, students did not always take advantage of these opportunities. Item D2 received the lowest rating of 2.0 in the Active Learning Environment. In 35 percent of the classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students made "connections from content to real-life experiences."

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
E.1	**2.5**	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	7%	43%	43%	7%
E.2	**2.6**	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	7%	57%	29%	7%
E.3	**2.5**	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	7%	50%	29%	14%
E.4	**1.5**	Understands how her/his work is assessed	0%	14%	21%	64%
E.5	**1.8**	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	0%	29%	21%	50%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.2**				

Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment

The Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment received an overall rating of 2.2 on a four-point scale. This rating is one of the lowest ratings of the seven learning environments. Observers noted that students were being questioned about "individual progress/learning," (E1) in 50 percent of the classrooms; students demonstrated or verbalized "understanding of the lesson/content," (E3) in 57 percent of the classrooms and responded "to teacher feedback to improve understanding," (E2) in 64 percent of the classrooms. Item E4, "Understands how her/his work is assessed," was evident/very evident in only 14 percent of the classrooms while item E5, "Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback," was evident/very evident in only 29 percent of the classrooms. Observers noted students were seldom provided opportunities to reflect on their work and adjust their work accordingly. Reflecting on work enhances its meaning while encouraging insight and complex learning. Reflective classrooms can help fully engage students in making meaning out of their learning.

F. Well-Managed Learning Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
F.1	**3.3**	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	29%	71%	0%	0%
F.2	**3.1**	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	21%	64%	14%	0%
F.3	**2.6**	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	7%	64%	14%	14%
F.4	**2.2**	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	7%	43%	14%	36%
F.5	**2.9**	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	21%	50%	21%	7%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.8**				

Well-Managed Learning Environment

The Well-Managed Learning Environment received an overall rating of 2.8 on a four-point scale. This was the strongest of the seven Learning Environments. It was noted in 100 percent of the classrooms that students spoke and interacted "respectfully with teacher(s) and peers," (F1). This item received the highest rating of 3.3 out of an overall rating of 2.8. In 85 percent of the classrooms it was evident/very evident that students followed "classroom rules" and worked "well with others," (F2) while in 71 percent of the classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students demonstrated an ability to transition "smoothly and efficiently to activities," (F3). Additionally, it was evident/very evident in 71 percent of the classrooms that students knew "classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences" (F5). In 50 percent of the classrooms it was evident/very evident that students collaborated "with other students during student-centered activities," (F4) making this the lowest rated item in the Well-Managed Learning Environment with a rating of 2.2. Team members noted the behavior of students was sufficient to promote student learning.

G. Digital Learning Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
G.1	**2.0**	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	14%	21%	14%	50%
G.2	**1.7**	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	14%	7%	14%	64%
G.3	**1.6**	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	7%	14%	7%	71%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**1.8**				

Digital Learning Environment

The Digital Learning Environment received an overall rating of 1.8 on a four-point scale, which was the lowest rated of the seven Learning Environments. In the majority of classrooms, technology primarily was used as an instructional tool (e.g., videos, teacher-created PowerPoint presentations aligned to lesson content, bell ringers) rather than put in the hands of students. The use of "digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning," (G1) was evident/very evident in 35 percent of the classrooms. Student use of digital tools/technology to "conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning," (G2) and "communicate and work collaboratively for learning," (G3) was evident/very evident in only 21 percent of the classrooms. The low ratings in this Learning Environment revealed a lack of student-centered technology and provided a significant opportunity to leverage technology to motivate and engage students in their learning.

Findings

Improvement Priority

Document the supervision and evaluation process whereby school leaders monitor and effectively modify instructional practices that meet the learning needs of the students. Ensure these procedures include frequent classroom observations that provide meaningful feedback to teachers about improving student performance and processes to monitor school and classroom effectiveness (e.g., reviews of unit or lesson planning documents, examination of student work and assessment results). **(Primary Indicator 3.4, Secondary Indicator 3.2)**

Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in the addendum to this report, suggested the current staff supervision, monitoring and evaluation processes have not improved professional practice or increased student achievement. Of particular concern was the 2014-2015 ACT Aspire reading, mathematics and writing achievement data. Reading scores indicated only 6 percent of sixth grade students, 8.8 percent of seventh graders and 19.3 percent of eighth graders met standards. A total of 11.3 percent of the students met reading standards as compared to 20.7 percent of students in similar schools across the state, and students scored below the state average of 32.7 percent. Percentages of students meeting standards in mathematics were 26.9 percent in grade 6; 8.8 percent in grade 7; and 4.4 percent in grade 8. Thirteen and a half percent of all students met mathematics standards as compared to 18.3 percent of students in similar schools and 46.7 percent of students at the state level. In writing, 7.8 percent of the students met passing goals as compared to the 17.8 percent student passage rate for similar schools and compared to the state passing rate of 24.4 percent. Although 45.3 percent of students met English language art (ELA) standards, the school consistently scored below similar schools and below the state average of 67.9 percent.

School scores for the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) also declined from 2013 to 2015. This assessment was administered in science and social studies only and fell well below state averages.

Stakeholder Survey Data:

Survey data suggested that 86 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “All teachers in the school use multiple types of assessments to modify instruction and to revise the curriculum” and 79 percent agreed/strongly agreed “all teachers in our school monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment based on data from student assessments and examination of professional practice.” Survey data indicated mixed results in reference to the school’s purpose and direction. Seventy-one percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school’s purpose statement is based on shared values and beliefs that guide decision-making” and 79 percent agreed/strongly agreed “Our school’s leaders ensure all staff members use supervisory feedback to improve student learning.” Fifty-seven percent agreed/strongly agreed that the “school’s leaders hold all staff members accountable for student learning.” In the 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate Survey, 76 percent of staff agreed/mostly agreed that teacher evaluation at their school “focuses on instructional improvement,” and 88 percent agreed/mostly agreed that “school administrators visit classrooms to observe instruction.”

Parent survey data revealed 64 percent agreed/strongly agreed with the statement "My child is given multiple assessments to measure his/her understanding of what was taught." In the 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate Survey, 78 percent of the parents agreed/strongly agreed teachers "give homework that helps their child learn," and 81 percent agreed/strongly agreed their child's teachers "provide extra help when their child needs it."

Fifty-seven percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with "All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs."

Stakeholder Interviews:
Interview data revealed mixed responses among stakeholders when asked to describe processes and procedures used to monitor and evaluate staff and program effectiveness. There were inconsistencies with responses referring to frequencies of walkthroughs, examination of student work and student assessments, etc. Interview data indicated little focus on the collection and analysis of data from the school's evaluation and monitoring process. Teachers, for example, generally could not confirm the existence of a structured, school professional development plan that provided systematic training to help teachers consistently implement high-yield instructional strategies.

Teachers also reported that they felt "overwhelmed" with district and school initiatives (e.g., school improvement planning process, vertical/horizontal planning, district training, lesson planning, data meetings).

Documents and Artifacts:
A review of meeting agendas, lesson plans, stakeholder perception data, student achievement results, student performance data, teacher evaluation procedures and the observations of instructional methods indicated a need to enhance monitoring of instructional practices to ensure student success. Interview data also indicated that lesson plans were monitored, but not for the purpose of checking for intentional inclusion of highly effective instructional strategies at the appropriate level of rigor. Furthermore, 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate Survey results indicated 71 percent agreed/mostly agreed "The faculty and staff at my school have a shared vision."

Improvement Priority

Identify, implement and monitor a systematic process whereby faculty, staff and school leaders collect, analyze and use findings from multiple data sources to identify and implement targeted professional development. Compile and analyze longitudinal data to determine trends related to student learning, readiness levels, instruction, program effectiveness and organizational conditions. Provide ongoing training and support for professional and support staff in the appropriate use of data to improve instructional effectiveness, organizational capacity and student learning. **(Primary Indicator 5.2, Secondary Indicator 5.4)**

Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in the attachment to this report, did not suggest the current staff supervision, monitoring and evaluation processes have resulted in effective professional practice and improved levels of student learning. The 2014-2015 ACT Aspire reading, mathematics and writing achievement data revealed only 6 percent of sixth grade students, 8.8 percent of seventh graders and 19.3 percent of eighth graders met standards. When compared to students in similar schools across the state, only 11.3 percent of the students at Howard Middle School met standards, which fell below the 20.7 percent in similar schools. Students also scored below the state average of 32.7 percent. Only 26.9 percent in grade 6 met standards in mathematics; 8.8 percent in grade 7; and 4.4 percent in grade 8; 13.5 percent of all students met standards as compared to 18.3 percent of students in similar schools and 46.7 percent of students at the state level. Furthermore, in writing, 7.8 percent of the students met passing goals as compared to the 17.8 percent student passage rate for similar schools. These scores fell below the state passing rate of 24.4 percent. Although 45.3 percent of students met English language art (ELA) standards, the school consistently scored below similar schools and below the state average of 67.9 percent.

Classroom Observations Data:

Classroom observation data, as detailed in the Teaching and Learning Impact section of this report, revealed the Well-Managed Learning Environment was the highest rated. However, classroom observation data overall was mixed, suggesting a need to increase instructional capacity. Furthermore, classroom observation data revealed inconsistent use of research-aligned instruction and assessment practices that authentically engage students in learning or address individual learning needs. For example, students, "engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks" (B4) was evident/very evident in 50 percent of classrooms. Data also revealed it was evident/very evident in 42 percent of classrooms that students were "provided exemplars of high quality work" (B3). The extent to which students understood "how her/his work is assessed" (E4) was evident/very evident in only 14 percent of classrooms. Data also indicated that it was evident/very evident in only 29 percent of classrooms that students had "opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback" (E5). Students using "digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning" (G1) were evident/very evident in only 21 percent of classrooms.

Stakeholder Survey Data:

Stakeholder feedback data indicated 79 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed the school "monitors and adjusts curriculum, instruction, and assessment based on data from student assessments and examination of professional practice." In the 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate Survey, 83 percent of teachers agreed/mostly agreed "student assessment information is effectively used by teachers to plan instruction." Stakeholder feedback data revealed that 61 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that students were provided "an equitable curriculum that meets her/his learning needs." Additionally, 48 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "my child's teacher keeps me informed regularly of how my child is being graded." In the 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate Survey, 68 percent of parents agreed/mostly agreed their child's school gives them "information about what their child should be learning in school." Furthermore, 73 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that a "high-quality education is offered." Fifty-seven percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement that "teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs." The 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate revealed 81 percent of students agreed/mostly agreed their "classes are challenging (not too easy; they make me think)."

Stakeholder Interviews:

Stakeholder interview data revealed administrators and some teachers used data to inform instruction. However, teachers and administrators could not describe a systematic process for the use of data to inform instruction. Furthermore, interview data revealed a lack of a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness and success at the next level. Stakeholder interview data did not support the existence of a viable process that ensured professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation and organizational conditions.

Documents and Artifacts:

A thorough review of documents (e.g., state assessments, departmental and team meetings, the school's Self-Assessment, artifacts from school initiatives e.g., STAR, TE-21, Measures of Academic Progress [MAP], Compass English language arts, Compass math) revealed little evidence of a consistent practice for analyzing data and using results to improve student learning, instruction, program evaluation and organizational conditions.

Leadership Capacity

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress towards its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its institutional 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 enact strategies to improve results of student learning.

Purpose and direction are critical to successful institutions. A study conducted in 2010 by the London-based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reported that "in addition to improving performance, the research indicates that having a sense of shared purpose also improves employee engagement" and that "lack of understanding around purpose can lead to demotivation and emotional detachment, which in turn lead to a disengaged and dissatisfied workforce."

AdvancED has found through its evaluation of best practices in 32,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning that are aligned with the institutions' vision and supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Governance and leadership are key factors in raising institutional quality. Leaders, both local administrators and governing boards/authorities, are responsible for ensuring all learners achieve while also managing many other facets of an institution. Institutions that function effectively do so without tension between the governing board/authority, administrators, and educators and have established relationships of mutual respect and a shared vision (Feuerstein & Opfer, 1998). In a meta-analysis of educational institution leadership research, Leithwood and Sun (2012) found that leaders (school and governing boards/authority) can significantly "influence school conditions through their achievement of a shared vision and agreed-on goals for the organization, their high expectations and support of organizational members, and their practices that strengthen school culture and foster collaboration within the organization." With the increasing demands of accountability placed on institutional leaders, leaders who empower others need considerable autonomy and involve their communities to attain continuous improvement goals. Leaders who engage in such practices experience a greater level of success (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Similarly, governing boards/authorities that focus on policy-making are more likely to allow institutional leaders the autonomy to make decisions that impact teachers and students and are less responsive to politicization than boards/authorities that respond to vocal citizens (Greene, 1992).

AdvancED's experience gained through evaluation of best practices has indicated that a successful institution has leaders who are advocates for the institution's vision and improvement efforts. The

leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The institution's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Standard 1 Purpose and Direction

The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	1.33
1.2	The school leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking and life skills.	2.00
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	2.00

Standard 2 Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and support practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	2.00
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	2.50
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	2.00
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	2.00
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	2.00
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	2.00

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

The AdvancED surveys (student, parent, and staff) are directly correlated to the AdvancED Standards and Indicators. They provide not only direct information about stakeholder satisfaction but also become a source of data for triangulation by the Diagnostic Review Team as it evaluates indicators.

Institutions are asked to collect and analyze stakeholder feedback data, then submit the data and the analyses to the Diagnostic Review Team for review. The Diagnostic Review Team evaluates the quality of the administration of the surveys by institution and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Evaluative Criteria	Average Team Rating
1. Questionnaire Administration	1.00
2. Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00

Findings

Improvement Priority

Further develop, implement and sustain a positive school culture by aligning a clearly defined school purpose and direction with a comprehensive plan of continuous improvement. Ensure meaningful engagement and communication with all stakeholders. Monitor stakeholder involvement to ensure the creation of a strong sense of collectivity and unite stakeholders through the school's primary purpose. **(Indicator 2.4)**

Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in the addendum to this report, showed the school did not meet benchmarks on the ACT Aspire nor on the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS). In 2015, only six percent of sixth graders scored at or above grade level in reading, and only 27 percent scored at or above grade level in math. For seventh grade, only 8.8 percent scored at or above grade level in reading, and only 8.8 percent scored at or above grade level in math. In eighth grade, only 19.3 percent of the students scored at or above grade level in reading, and only 4.4 percent scored at or above grade level in math. These percentages fell well below the state average for reading (37.2 percent) and math (46.7 percent).

Stakeholder Survey Data:

Stakeholder feedback data revealed 71 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that the "continuous improvement process is based on data, goals, actions, and measures for growth." Furthermore, staff survey results showed 64 percent agreed/strongly agreed that the "school's leaders support an innovative and collaborative culture," and "hold all students to high academic standards." Fifty-seven percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that school leaders "hold themselves accountable for student learning." Additionally, 57 percent agreed/strongly agreed that leadership holds "all staff members accountable for student learning."

Survey results revealed 69 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed the school had a culture of "high expectations for students in all classes" and 60 percent agreed/strongly agreed that the "school shares responsibility for student learning with stakeholders." In the 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate Survey, 72 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed they were "satisfied with the learning environment at their child's school."

Survey data revealed 72 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that teachers, staff and school leadership had high expectations for them. In addition, 65 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed the school provided them with "challenging curriculum and learning experiences." In addition, in the 2015 South Carolina Climate School Survey, 98 percent of students felt their "teachers expect students to learn."

Stakeholder Interviews:

Interview data generally indicated students were held to high academic expectations across grade levels and courses. Conversely, classroom observation data revealed that it was evident/very evident in 50

percent of the classrooms that students were "engaged in rigorous coursework, discussion, and/or tasks" (B4) and were asked and responded to "questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)" (B5). Interviews showed many stakeholders were unable to articulate how leaders and staff aligned their decisions and actions with continuous improvement to achieve the school's purpose. Interview data revealed the lack of a process for revisiting and revising the school's vision statement and a consistent process for communicating that vision to all stakeholders.

Interview data revealed a few teachers noted they had to create their own support system for maintaining high morale for teachers and high expectations for students (e.g., "Soup-er Tuesday, "Chew-n-Chat" for teachers, differentiated instruction based on student data and needs.) However, these practices were not implemented schoolwide or used consistently by all staff members.

Documents and Artifacts:
A review of policies and bylaws, student and faculty handbooks, the school improvement plan, the Title I plan, stakeholder surveys and budget allocation documents showed little evidence that supported the alignment of professional practices with the school's improvement plan. In addition, Team Members found no evidence of a structured plan to clearly communicate the school's defined purpose and direction or continuous improvement plan with all stakeholders.

Resource Utilization

The use and distribution of resources must be aligned and supportive of the needs of an institution and the students served. Institutions must ensure that resources are aligned with the stated mission and are distributed equitably so that the needs of students are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes an examination of the allocation and use of resources; the equity of resource distribution to need; the ability of the institution to ensure appropriate levels of funding and sustainability of resources; as well as evidence of long-range capital and resource planning effectiveness.

Institutions, regardless of their size, need access to sufficient resources and systems of support to be able to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts that result in a continuous improvement cycle. Indeed, a study conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith- Hansen, L., 2003) "demonstrated a strong relationship between resources and student success... both the level of resources and their explicit allocation seem to affect educational outcomes."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in the 32,000 institutions in the AdvancED network that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff members to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4 Resource and Support System

The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction and the educational program.	1.00
4.2	Instructional time, material resources and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	2.00
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services and equipment to provide a safe, clean and healthy environment for all students and staff.	2.67
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	2.33
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning and operational needs.	2.00

4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.00
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning needs of all students.	2.00

Conclusion

The principal at Robert E. Howard Middle School has served as the leader of the school for the past three years. School leadership and staff acknowledged the need to improve student learning. However, they also believed that a caring climate was essential to student achievement. The school leadership believed in a robust student support program that nurtured the well-being of each student. In addition, school leadership was committed to providing an academic plan that focused on literacy and mathematics. The school implemented some programs (e.g., Bruin Leadership Academy for Boys, Emerald Academy for Girls, Bringing Up Grades Successfully (BUGS), community/student mentoring programs, Career Cafes) to provide character education and build self-esteem. Although some programs warranted further refinement, it was evident that the school had experienced success with some of them. In all interviews, stakeholders referenced faculty, staff and school leadership caring for the "whole" student. Some parents expressed their belief that Robert E. Howard was the best middle school for their child. The number of discipline referrals had decreased, and students exhibited pride in their school, which the Team considered rare and refreshing. All professional and support staff should be commended for maintaining a climate where all students felt nurtured and supported.

Robert E. Howard Middle School maintained a clean, orderly school environment. Students were well-behaved, mannerly and friendly. Team Members concurred the school was clean and welcoming. Students were helpful, considerate and accommodating to the Team. The hospitality extended by the professional and support staff was appreciated. The Team observed a sense of mutual respect among students. Students expressed that school leadership and teachers demonstrated a strong sense of dedication to them.

Robert E. Howard Middle School actively participated in the Carolina Consortium for Enterprise Learning. The school had benefited from an Enterprise Learning Coach (ELC) and a Digital Resource Coach (DRC) provided by the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant. In interviews, teachers shared that the modeling of lessons and professional development provided by both coaches had positively impacted their instruction. Additionally, students benefited from the one-to-one laptop initiative. Parents also noted the positive impact the initiative had on instilling a sense of responsibility and providing opportunities for equitable use of resources. The Carolina Consortium for Enterprise Learning has brought attention to data and technology that benefited all aspects of the school.

This year, school leadership made a concentrated effort to focus improvements around academics and instruction. To reduce class sizes, the school used Compass ELA and Compass Math to supplement their general English language arts and math classes. Students spend 50 minutes in the general education classroom and the remainder of the period in the Compass program. The staff had consistent professional development on data results and interpretation. The school had a data room where they met and discussed data recorded on each individual student. School leadership made sure vertical collaboration took place within the school. School leadership had established working relationships with the higher education institutions in the area and had built strong connections between the school and business leaders in the community.

Stakeholder interview data indicated that Robert E. Howard Middle School faculty and staff truly cared about their students and was concerned about their performance. Although surveys indicated high expectations for students, observations showed limited evidence of rigor, differentiation and challenging learning experiences. While students were grouped, direct instruction remained the primary method of instructional delivery. Teachers were required to implement station rotations, or "centers", to deliver targeted mini-lessons with a small group of students while the rest of the class rotated through a variety of planned centers. This strategy could be very effective if teachers were executing it with fidelity. It is recommended by the Team that teachers receive more professional development on the effective use of station rotations and small group instruction.

Although school leadership managed the limited resources well, the school had not established a systematic continuous improvement process. Observations seldom revealed teaching effectively implementing research-based instructional strategies. Furthermore, professional development activities had not been effective and had not resulted in higher student achievement. As a result, the Team recommends school leadership and staff develop a more targeted continuous improvement process that involves all stakeholders. In addition, a more effective classroom monitoring process needs to be implemented to address the proper use of data to drive instruction and to make modifications to ensure students are routinely engaged in higher-order thinking and problem solving. The Team identified areas to leverage for increased student achievement that included providing meaningful and timely feedback to teachers regarding high expectations, proper lesson planning and using professional learning communities meetings effectively.

Improvement Priorities

Document the supervision and evaluation process whereby school leaders monitor and effectively modify instructional practices that meet the learning needs of the students. Ensure these procedures include frequent classroom observations that provide meaningful feedback to teachers about improving student performance and processes (e.g., reviews of unit or lesson planning documents, examination of student work and assessment results) to monitor school and classroom effectiveness. **(Primary Indicator 3.4, Secondary Indicator 3.2)**

Identify, implement and monitor a systematic process whereby faculty, staff and school leaders collect, analyze and use findings from multiple data sources to identify and implement targeted professional development. Compile and analyze longitudinal data to determine trends related to student learning, readiness levels, instruction, program effectiveness and organizational conditions. Provide ongoing training and support for professional and support staff in the appropriate use of data to improve instructional effectiveness, organizational capacity and student learning. **(Primary Indicator 5.2, Secondary Indicator 5.4)**

Further develop, implement and sustain a positive school culture by aligning a clearly defined school purpose and direction with a comprehensive plan of continuous improvement. Ensure meaningful engagement and communication with all stakeholders. Monitor stakeholder involvement to ensure the creation of a strong sense of collectivity and unite stakeholders through the school's primary purpose. **(Indicator 2.4)**

Team Roster

Lead Evaluator	Brief Biography
Judy Pugh Georgia	Judy Pugh currently serves as Director of Business Development for AdvancED. She has 17 years of experience teaching high school Mathematics, English, Chemistry, Physics and Biology. Mrs. Pugh's administrative experience includes working with the Alabama Department of Education as an Education Specialist in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction, and Assessment and Accountability. She has also served as Assistant Superintendent of Muscle Shoals City Schools in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Her most recent experience prior to joining AdvancED was as an Independent Education Consultant with STI Student Achievement Services. Mrs. Pugh is currently pursuing a PhD in Educational Research from the University of Alabama.
Team Members	
Frances Bouknight South Carolina	Mrs. Frances K. Bouknight currently serves as the Director of Accountability and Adult Education in Lexington County School District Three. She has 42 years of experience as a high school mathematics teacher and administrator. She received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Newberry College, a Master of Mathematics Degree from the University of South Carolina, and a Master of Educational Administration Degree from the University of South Carolina. Her areas of certification include Mathematics, Secondary Principal, Secondary Supervisor and Superintendent.
Judy Cheatwood South Carolina	Judy Cheatwood currently serves as a Priority Schools Transformation Coach and Consultant with the South Carolina Department of Education. Mrs. Cheatwood's tenure includes over 30 years of experience as a both teacher and administrator in the large, urban Akron Public School District (Ohio). Her teaching assignments included both regular and special education (K-12) classrooms; teaching as a Title I Reading Specialist and providing Speech and Hearing Therapy services to students. She has been a principal at all three levels: elementary, middle and high schools, and has extensive experience in classroom, building and district-level analysis and problem solving, recommending solutions and providing individualized professional learning experiences for teachers and administrators. She also served as a part-time instructor of classes at the University of Akron. Mrs. Cheatwood continues to work as an educational consultant through her independent agency, Academic Advances, Incorporated. She has worked extensively with the SREB High Schools That Work and Making Middle Grades Work initiatives and with the South Carolina Department of Education departments of Career Education and School Transformation as a Technical Assistance Visit (TAV) Team Leader and teacher trainer. Mrs. Cheatwood holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education (Elementary and Middle School Classroom, K-8; Special Education, K-12), a Master of Science Degree in Education Administration (Elementary

	Principal and Secondary Principal, K-12), and has completed post-graduate work in Education with a specialization in Classroom Instruction and Learning.
Dr. Carla Daniels South Carolina	Dr. Daniels earned an Ed.D. in curriculum and instruction. She also achieved National Board Certification in the area of library media services. Dr. Daniels retired at the end of the 2015 school year from her position as a library media specialist in Richland School District One. She has also been employed as a reading, middle school language arts and English teacher. Dr. Daniels has also written curriculum and assessments, and provided professional development for various schools and at the district level. She has also served on various district committees and presented at state conferences. Dr. Daniels has extensive experience in elementary, middle and high school settings. She has been involved with AdvancED for several years and served two terms on South Carolina's state SACS board. She has served on district teams and as lead evaluator on numerous school quality-assurance review teams. Additionally, Dr. Daniels has written and co-written grant proposals that have been awarded in excess of $2.5 million.
Blue Huggins South Carolina	Blue Huggins currently serves as an assistant principal at Dillon High School in Dillon District Four. Her educational career spans 25 years, including K-12 experience as a Curriculum Specialist, English Language Arts Coordinator, Title I Facilitator, Reading Interventionist, Literacy Coach, Teacher Specialist On Site, graduate instructor and classroom teacher. Ms. Huggins' certifications include Secondary Principal, Elementary Principal, Elementary Supervisor, Reading Teacher, Elementary, Early Childhood, Literacy Teacher endorsement and National Board certification in 2001. She has received a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration and Supervision from Winthrop University, Master of Education degree in Reading from the University of South Carolina, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Francis Marion University.
Dr. Laura Koskela South Carolina	Dr. Laura C. Koskela is completing her 39th year as an educator, having served in Georgia, Massachusetts, and South Carolina. She completed her doctorate in 1984 from the University of Georgia and holds degrees from Winthrop College, Converse College, and the University of Massachusetts. Currently, she is an Assistant Superintendent in Laurens County School District 56 in Clinton, South Carolina.

About AdvancED

AdvancED is the world leader in providing improvement and accreditation services to education providers of all types in their pursuit of excellence in serving students. AdvancED serves as a trusted partner to more than 32,000 public and private schools and school systems – enrolling more than 20 million students - across the United States and 70 countries.

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) that was founded in 1917 became part of AdvancED.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. The Accreditation Divisions of AdvancED share research-based quality standards that cross school system, state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified and consistent process designed to engage educational institutions in continuous improvement.

References

Alwin, L. (2002). The will and the way of data use. School Administrator, 59(11), 11.

Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y. (2010). Teachers' mathematical knowledge, cognitive activation in the classroom, and student progress. American Educational Research Journal, 47(1), 133-180.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. (2012). Shared purpose: the golden thread? London: CIPD.

Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S. (2008). An investigation of the impacts of teacher-driven professional development. Teacher Education Quarterly, 35(2), 134-154.

Conley, D.T. (2007). Redefining college readiness (Vol. 3). Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center.

Datnow, A., Park, V., & Wohlstetter, P. (2007). Achieving with data: How high-performing school systems use data to improve instruction for elementary students. Los Angeles, CA: Center on Educational Governance, USC.

Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R. (2005). Data driven decision making in Southwestern Pennsylvania school districts. Working paper. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Ding, C. & Sherman, H. (2006). Teaching effectiveness and student achievement: Examining the relationship. Educational Research Quarterly, 29 (4), 40-51.

Doyle, D. P. (2003). Data-driven decision making: Is it the mantra of the month or does it have staying power? T.H.E. Journal, 30(10), 19-21.

Feuerstein, A., & Opfer, V. D. (1998). School board chairmen and school superintendents: An analysis of perceptions concerning special interest groups and educational governance. Journal of School Leadership, 8, 373-398.

Fink, D., & Brayman, C. (2006). School leadership succession and the challenges of change. Educational School leadership Quarterly, 42 (62), 61-89.

Greene, K. (1992). Models of school-board policy-making. Educational School leadership Quarterly, 28 (2), 220-236.

Horng, E., Klasik, D., & Loeb, S. (2010). Principal time-use and school effectiveness. American Journal of Education 116, (4) 492-523.

Lafee, S. (2002). Data-driven districts. School Administrator, 59(11), 6-7, 9-10, 12, 14-15.

Leithwood, K., & Sun, J. (2012). The Nature and effects of transformational school leadership: A meta-analytic review of unpublished research. Educational School leadership Quarterly, 48 (387). 388-423.

Marks, H., Louis, K.S., & Printy, S. (2002). The capacity for organizational learning: Implications for pedagogy and student achievement. In K. Leithwood (Ed.), Organizational learning and school improvement (p. 239-266). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

McIntire, T. (2002). The administrator's guide to data-driven decision making. Technology and Learning, 22(11), 18-33.

Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L. (2003). Examination of resource allocation in education: connecting spending to student performance. Austin, TX: SEDL.

Student Performance Data Tables

Percentage of Students Meeting Benchmark of "Ready" on ACT Aspire (Grades 3-8) at the School and in the State (2014-2015)

Content Area by Grade Level	% Ready Grade 6	% Ready Grade 7	% Ready Grade 8	Total School	% Ready State
English	43.9	44.7	47.3	45.3	67.9
Reading	6.0	8.8	19.3	11.3	37.2
Math	26.9	8.8	4.4	13.5	46.7
Writing	19.2	3.5	0.9	7.8	24.4
ACT Readiness	N/A	N/A	N/A	76.0	N/A

Plus

- English for all grade levels were close to 50 percent "Ready"
- Grade 6 math carried the school with 26.9 percent "Ready"

Delta

- Reading and Writing is definitely a school-wide concern
- Writing for Howard was significantly lower when compared to the state

Percentages of Students Meeting Grade Level Standards at the School on the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) by Grade Level (2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015)

	Grade 6			Grade 7			Grade 8		
	2015	2014	2013	2015	2014	2013	2015	2014	2013
Writing	N/A	60.5	54.7	N/A	54.0	63.8	N/A	47.6	65.6
ELA	N/A	54.4	55.3	N/A	45.7	58.0	N/A	39.7	58.3
Math	N/A	49.6	41.7	N/A	24.8	36.7	N/A	33.3	43.3
Science	37.9	61.9	61.5	33.3	41.9	68.0	32.5	27.8	37.5

Plus

- There was an increase in grade 6 writing and math scores during the last administering of SCPASS

Delta

- Grade 6 and 7 science showed a decrease in performance from 2014 to 2015

Percentages of Students Scoring at 70 or above on the End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments at the School and in the State (2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015)

Content Area	% School (14-15)	% State (14-15)	% School (13-14)	% State (13-14)	% School (12-13)	% State (12-13)
Algebra I	N/A	85.7	63.0	NA	83.3	NA
English I	93.9	75.1	93.1	NA	100	NA

Plus

- English I EOC has been consistently 90 percent and/or above for the past 3 years
- When Algebra I was last administered scores were above 80 percent

Delta

- Algebra I is no longer offered to the students

Stakeholder Survey Plus/Delta

The Survey Plus/Delta is the team's brief analysis all stakeholder survey data which is intended to highlight areas of strength (+) that were identified through the survey process as well as leverage points for improvement (Δ).

Teaching and Learning Impact

(Standards 3 and 5)

+ Plus: (minimum of 75 percent strongly agree/agree)

1. 82 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My child has up-to-date computers and other technology to learn."
2. 82 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides a safe learning environment."
3. 79 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides opportunities for students to participate in activities that interest them."
4. 86 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school use a variety of technologies as instructional resources."
5. 86 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school use consistent common grading and reporting policies across grade levels and courses based on clearly defined criteria."
6. 86 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school uses data to monitor student readiness and success at the next level."

Δ Delta:

1. 45 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my child's teachers give work that challenges my child."
2. 48 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my child's teachers keep me informed regularly of how my child in being graded."
3. 50 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, a formal structure exists so that each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience."
4. 50 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, a formal process is in place to support new staff members in their professional practice."
5. 54 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my teachers keep my family informed of my academic progress."
6. 50 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My school considers students' opinions when planning ways to improve the school."

Leadership Capacity

(Standards 1 and 2)

+ Plus: (minimum of 75 percent strongly agree/agree)

1. 79 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's purpose statement is clearly focused on student success."
2. 79 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, challenging curriculum and learning experiences provide equity for all students in the development of learning, thinking and life skills."
3. 79 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders regularly evaluate staff members on criteria designed to improve teaching and learning."
4. 79 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, all school personnel regularly engage families in their children's learning progress."
5. 86 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, all stakeholders are informed of policies, processes, and procedures related to grading and reporting."

Δ Delta:

1. 57 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's governing body does not interfere with the operation or leadership of our school."
2. 64 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders expect staff members to hold all students to high academic standards."
3. 57 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders hold all staff members accountable for student learning."
4. 25 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In my school, students treat adults with respect."
5. 38 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In my school, students help each other even if they are not friends."

Resource Utilization

(Standard 4)

+ Plus: (minimum of 75 percent strongly agree/agree)

1. 82 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides a safe learning environment."
2. 79 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides opportunities for students to participate in activities that interest them."
3. 79 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides sufficient material resources to meet student needs."
4. 79 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school maintains facilities that support student learning."
5. 79 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides a plan for the acquisition and support of technology to support school's operational needs."

Δ Delta:

1. 61 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school ensures the instructional time is protected and interruptions are minimized.”
2. 70 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school provides students with access to a variety of information resources to support their learning.”
3. 57 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school provides qualified staff members to support student learning.”
4. 64 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school provides instructional time and resources to support our school’s goals and priorities.”
5. 42 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “In my school, the building and grounds are safe, clean and provide a healthy place for learning.”
6. 37 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “In my school, students help each other even if they are not friends.”

Diagnostic Review Team Schedule

Tuesday, April 12, 2016

Time	Event	Where	Who
3:00 p.m.	Hotel Check-in	**Comfort Inn and Suites Orangeburg, SC**	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4: 00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.	Team Work Session #1 • Review and discuss performance data, stakeholder survey data, Self-Assessment, Executive Summary, other diagnostics in ASSIST, documents and artifacts provided by the school, to determine initial ratings for all indicators.	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members
5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.	Dinner on your own		
6:15 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Principal Overview	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members, Principal & Leadership Team
7:15 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Determine interview questions, review Wednesday's schedule, overview of eleot™, and discuss review logistics	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Wednesday – April 13, 2016

Time	Event	Where	Who
	Breakfast	Hotel	
7:40 a.m.	Team arrives at school	School office	Diagnostic Review Team Members
7:50 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Classroom Observations and Interviews		Diagnostic Review Team Members
9:50 a.m. – 10:20 a.m. 10:25 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.	Assistant Principal Interview Principal's Interview		Diagnostic Review Team Members
12:00 p.m.-1:15 p.m.	Lunch – Team Members eat when it can fit into their individual schedule		

1:15 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Continued Classroom Observations 1. 70% of professional staff (representing a cross-section of the faculty)		Diagnostic Review Team Members
3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
3:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #2 • Tabulate classroom observation data from Day #1 • Team Members determine individual second ratings for all indicators • Discuss Improvement Priorities • Team Members draft Improvement Priorities that are then shared with the Team. Team Members and Lead Evaluator provide feedback.	Hotel conference room	Diagnostic Review Team Members
5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	Dinner on your own		
6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #2 continued		

Thursday – April 14, 2016

Time	Event	Where	Who
	Breakfast	Hotel	
7:50 a.m.	Team arrives at school		
7:50 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Continue interviews and artifact review, conduct classroom observations that were not done on Day #1 Small group interviews 1. Parents 2. Students 3. Support Staff 4. Interventionists/Student Services	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
12:00 p.m.- 1:15 p.m.	Lunch – Team Members eat when it can fit into their individual schedule		
4:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		

4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Team Work Session #3 • Review findings from Day #2 • Tabulate and review final eleot™ Learning Environment ratings • Team Members determine individual final ratings for all indicators The team should examine: • Improvement Priorities (indicators rated at 1 or 2) • Summary overview for each standard • Learning Environment narrative • Discuss leadership determination	Hotel	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Friday– April 15, 2016

Time	Event	Where	Who
7:40 a.m.	Breakfast/Check out of hotel and departure for school	Hotel	
7:50 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Final Team Work Session Team Members review all components of the Diagnostic Review Team's findings including: • Final ratings for standards and indicators • Coherency and accuracy of the Improvement Priorities • Detailed evidence for all of the findings • eleot™ summary statements and narrative by learning environment • Leadership determination	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members