

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In the Supreme Court

APPEAL FROM LEE COUNTY
Court of Common Pleas

Thomas W. Cooper, Jr., Circuit Court Judge

Appellate Case No. 2007-065159

RECEIVED

JUL 12 2017

S.C. SUPREME COURT

Abbeville County School District, *et al.*,

Appellants-Respondents,

vs.

The State of South Carolina, *et al.*, of whom
Hugh K. Leatherman, as President Pro Tempore
of the Senate and as a representative of the
South Carolina Senate, and James H. Lucas,
as Speaker of the House of Representatives and
as a representative of The South Carolina House
of Representatives,
are

Respondents-Appellants,

and

The State of South Carolina, Henry D. McMaster,
as Governor of the State of South Carolina,
are

Respondents.

**James H. Lucas, as Speaker and Representative of the South Carolina House of
Representatives' Supplemental Petition to Vacate Continuing Jurisdiction or, in the
Alternative, Dismiss the South Carolina House of Representatives as a Respondent**

In *Abbeville County School District v. State of South Carolina*, 410 S.C. 619, 767 S.E.2d 157 (2014) (“*Abbeville I*”), the Court’s majority observed that when it comes to exploring innovative ways to address and remedy the problems in the Plaintiff Districts, “the Plaintiff Districts have opted for a course of self-preservation, placing all the blame for the blighted state of education in their district at the feet of the Defendants.” *Id.* at 650, 767 S.E.2d at 173. The Plaintiff Districts continue to pursue this strategy to this day. As the House contends in its Petition to Vacate Jurisdiction, “ideas intended to create better conditions in the Plaintiff Districts are . . . opposed if they interfere with the established education system.” (Pet. to Vacate 8.) The most recent example of Plaintiff’s unwavering adherence to this proposition is Allendale County School District, in which once again the Plaintiff Districts play the only hand they ever think to play—namely, running to the nearest media outlet to complain that the General Assembly has failed to do enough to remedy the problems in the Plaintiff Districts, while at the same time erecting road blocks to any ideas that seek to address what this Court’s majority characterized as “the overarching dilemmas emanating from the organizational structure of public education.” *Abbeville II*, 410 S.C. at 650, 767 S.E.2d at 173. The House should not continue to be subject to this Court’s jurisdiction only to annually be subjected to repeated criticism from the Plaintiff Districts, which this Court has already found to be “unnecessary and unfounded.” (Order dated Sept. 20, 2016 at 9.)

On June 19, 2017, after concluding that “Allendale Schools have failed to show improvement for many years” to the collective educational detriment of Allendale County students, State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman (“Spearman”) announced a state of emergency in Allendale County School District. Spearman made this announcement pursuant to Proviso 1A.12, one of the tools addressed in the House’s 2017 Report to the Court that allows the

State Superintendent of Education to take over management of a school district upon declaration of a state of emergency. (See House’s 2017 Report to the Court at 11-12.) This Proviso has been in effect for at least two years. However, two days after Spearman announced the state of emergency, Allendale County School District filed a Petition for Original Jurisdiction and Complaint for Declaratory Judgment in this Court seeking to enjoin the House, Senate, and Spearman from enforcing Proviso 1A.12. Energy that could have been devoted to the Court’s directive that the Plaintiff Districts “work in concert with the [d]efendants” is instead devoted to fighting unnecessary fights.

Allendale County School District is a small school district with approximately 1,200 students. For Fiscal Year 2016-17, Allendale School District will receive \$17,185 per pupil in state spending. Despite being a Plaintiff District with consistently one of the highest per pupil spending rates in the state, Allendale School District has been—and continues to be—unable to show better student improvement and better academic results. As found by AdvancEd, an independent accrediting organization, in its 2017 Diagnostic Review Report for Allendale County Schools,

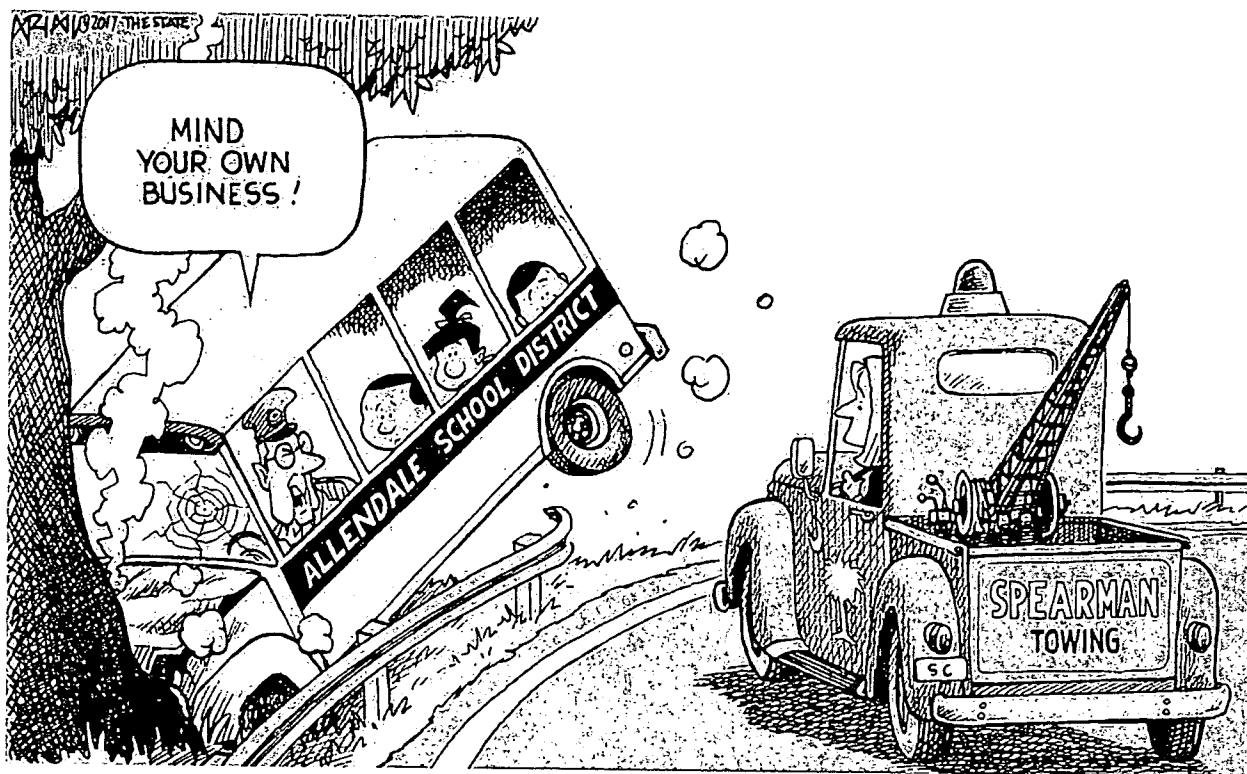
[s]tudent performance data . . . revealed that the school did not meet state student performance goals in 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. Students scored significantly below state averages . . . in all tested grade levels and subject areas for the past three years. The percentage of students scoring at 70 or above on the End-of-Course assessments was significantly below state averages for the past three years.

See *Diagnostic Review Report for Allendale County Schools*, p. 23.¹ Importantly, AdvancEd found that “[d]espite the chronic underperformance, *the board had neither mandated nor developed a plan to improve student performance.*” *Id.* (Emphasis added). Additionally, AdvancEd found that

¹ A copy of *Diagnostic Review Report for Allendale County Schools* is attached hereto as **Exhibit A.**

“[d]espite the chronically underperforming test results and the fact that three of the four schools in the district were designated Priority status, *there were no remediation plans developed by leaders to address student learning.*” *Id.* at 25 (Emphasis added).

In terms of student performance, only 8.4 percent of eighth graders scored “meets or exceeds” on the math portion of the SC READY assessment, and 30.6 percent scored meets or exceeds on the English/Language Arts (“ELA”) section. Statewide, 67.9 percent of students met the benchmarks in ELA, and 46.7 met them in math. *Id.* at 40. Sadly, results are not much better in science and social studies. *See id.* Nevertheless, the Allendale County School District refuses to accept competent assistance, no matter how temporary, in an effort to achieve the result of improved education in their district. A recent editorial cartoon appearing in *The State Newspaper* captures perfectly the publicly-perceived attitude of Allendale County school board members.²




² <http://www.thestate.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/cindi-ross-scope/article/157891659.html> (last visited July 2, 2017).

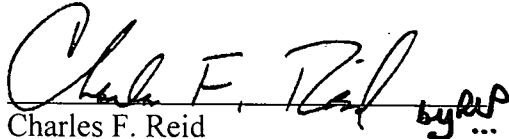
Beginning with the 1998 EAA, and continuing through the 2016-2017 legislative session, the General Assembly has consistently examined ways to assist the Superintendent when it comes providing technical assistance and, when necessary, assuming the management of a school or district. The decision as to when to intervene is ultimately left with the Superintendent. When Spearman recognized that more was needed to assist Allendale County School District, she took the next logical step as provided by Proviso 1A.12 in an attempt to improve the educational outlook for students in Allendale. But as demonstrated by the Allendale County lawsuit, the resistance to Spearman's takeover is about the financial interests of the district employees, not the best interests of the students. This is not about the House doing too little; rather, it is about administrators in the Plaintiff Districts standing in the way of reform to protect their fiefdom to the detriment of students in the districts.

This Court provided Plaintiffs an additional year to meet the ordered mandate of working in concert with Defendants to: (1) chart a path forward; (2) prioritize student learning; (3) set balanced priorities; (4) consider and apply the benefits of consolidation; and (5) discuss with county legislative delegations *and* school districts the prudence of (a) creating school districts filled with socioeconomically disadvantaged students, (b) exposing these students to substandard educational inputs, and then (c) maintaining that nothing can be done to improve such school districts unacceptable performances. (Order at 10-11.) The House is at a loss to determine how the Plaintiff districts have complied with this Court's clear directives. Rather, the House finds itself on the receiving end of stale criticism that this Court has previously found most unproductive.

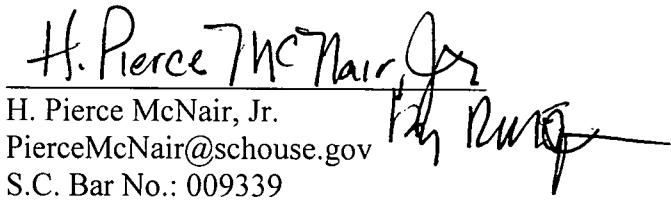
For these reasons, and for the reasons set forth in its previously filed Petition and Report, the House respectfully requests that this Court relinquish jurisdiction or dismiss the House from this action.

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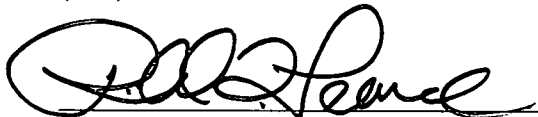
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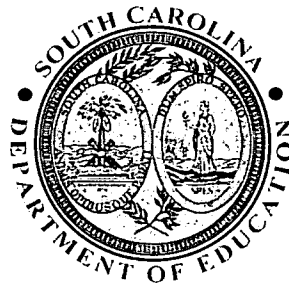
Exhibit A

DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW REPORT FOR ALLENDALE COUNTY SCHOOLS

3249 Allendale-Fairfax Highway
Fairfax, SC
29827

Leila Williams
Superintendent

February 21-24, 2017



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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.

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 seven 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

Allendale County Schools hosted a Diagnostic Review on February 21-24, 2017. The on-site review involved a five-member Team who provided their 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 Allendale County Schools for their cooperation and responsiveness to the review process.

Prior to the start of the Diagnostic Review, the Team engaged in a conference call and numerous communications through email to complete the initial intensive study, review and analysis of various documents provided by the district. The Lead Evaluator and the Associate Lead Evaluator conducted conference calls with the key leaders of the institution. District leaders planned and conducted the Internal Review with process assistance from the South Carolina AdvancED Operations Office. The district's Internal Review was submitted for review by the Diagnostic Review Team two weeks prior to the on-site review. Evidence and documentation to support the district's Self Assessment was provided electronically to the Team.

A total of 27 stakeholders were interviewed, as detailed in the chart below. The administrators' category included interviews with the superintendent, seven central office administrators, three building principals and four board members. One central office administrator was unavailable for an interview. One board member declined to be interviewed. Forty-eight core classrooms were observed during the Diagnostic Review.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Administrators	15
Instructional Staff	3
Support Staff	0
Students	5
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	4
TOTAL	27

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 system'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 system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	1.00
3.2	Curriculum, instruction and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	1.00
3.3	Teachers throughout the school system engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	1.00
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	1.20
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	1.00
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	1.00
3.7	Mentoring, coaching and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	1.00
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	1.00
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	1.00
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.	1.20
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	1.00
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	1.00

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

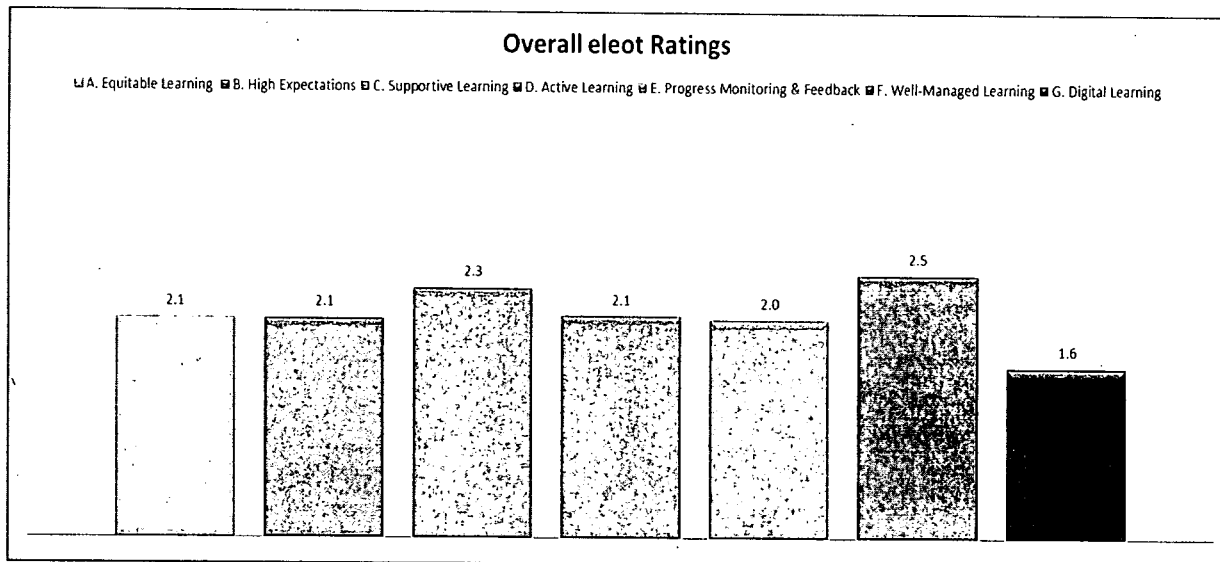
The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	1.00
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation and organizational conditions that support learning.	1.00
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	1.00
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	1.00
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	1.00

eProve™ 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 eProve™ 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

The Diagnostic Review Team conducted 48 classroom observations (all available core content classes) using the eleot classroom observation tool. The overall ratings ranged from 1.6 to 2.5 on a four-point scale. The highest rated was the Well-Managed Learning Environment and the lowest rated was the Digital Learning Environment. Items that typically were the lowest rated in the seven Learning Environments (described below) strongly correlated with curriculum, instructional practices and the effective use of data to modify classroom instruction. The Improvement Priorities for Indicators 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6 were directly supported by the classroom observation data.

eleot Analysis by Learning Environment

A: Equitable Learning Environment						
Item	Average Rating	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
A1	1.9	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	4%	21%	33%	42%
A2	2.5	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	13%	38%	40%	10%
A3	2.6	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	19%	40%	25%	17%
A4	1.2	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	0%	4%	13%	83%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		2.1				

Equitable Learning Environment:

It was evident/very evident in 25 percent of the classrooms that students were engaged in "differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet his/her needs" (A1). It was evident/very evident in 51 percent of the classrooms that students had "equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology and support" (A2).

In 59 percent of the classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students knew rules and consequences were "fair, clear and consistently applied" (A3). It was evident/very evident in four percent of the classrooms that students had "ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences/ backgrounds/cultures/differences" (A4). Team members indicated that the limited amount of differentiated instructional strategies supported the Improvement Priority to improve curriculum and instructional practice.

B. High Expectations Learning Environment						
Item	Average Rating	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
B1	2.5	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	8%	40%	44%	8%
B2	2.3	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	8%	35%	38%	19%
B3	1.6	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	4%	10%	25%	60%
B4	2.0	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	4%	17%	54%	25%
B5	1.9	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	2%	15%	50%	33%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		2.1				

High Expectations Learning Environment:

Observation data revealed that “exemplars of high quality work” were evident/very evident in 14 percent of the classrooms (B3). It was evident/very evident in 17 percent of the classrooms that students were asked and responded to “questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)” (B5). It was evident/very evident in 21 percent of the classrooms that students were engaged in “rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks” (B4), and it was evident/very evident in 43 percent of the classrooms that students were tasked with “activities and learning that are challenging but attainable” (B2). It was evident/very evident in 48 percent of the classrooms that students knew and strived to “meet the high expectations established by the teacher” (B1). Each item represented a possible leverage point for improvement in instructional practices.

C: Supportive Learning Environment						
Item	Average Rating	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
C1	2.5	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	15%	38%	35%	13%
C2	2.6	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	17%	38%	38%	8%
C3	2.3	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	8%	38%	25%	29%
C4	2.4	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	13%	31%	42%	15%
C5	1.9	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	6%	15%	38%	42%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		2.3				

Supportive Learning Environment:

It was evident/very evident in 53 percent of classes that students demonstrated or expressed "that learning experiences are positive" (C1). It was evident/very evident in 55 percent of classes that students have a "positive attitude about the classroom and learning" (C2). It was evident/very evident that students take "risks in learning" (C3) in 46 percent of classes observed.

It was evident/very evident in only 44 percent of classes that students were "provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks" (C4). It was evident/very evident in 21 percent of classes that students received "additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for his/her needs" (C5). These items supported the need for individualized instruction as well as the need to establish a positive classroom climate that encourages students to seek assistance and tackle difficult learning tasks.

D. Active Learning Environment						
Item	Average Rating	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
D1	2.1	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	8%	21%	42%	29%
D2	1.7	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	4%	21%	17%	58%
D3	2.4	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	19%	25%	38%	19%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		2.1				

Active Learning Environment:

It was evident/very evident in 44 percent of the classrooms that students were "actively engaged in the learning activities" (D3). It was evident/very evident in just 29 percent of the classrooms that students had "several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students" (D1). It was evident/very evident in 25 percent of the classrooms that students made "connections from content to real life experiences" (D2). These findings supported observations that most classroom instruction was teacher-centric.

E. Progress Monitoring & Feedback Learning Environment						
Item	Average Rating	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
E1	2.2	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	4%	29%	48%	19%
E2	2.3	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	6%	27%	54%	13%
E3	2.3	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	4%	33%	54%	8%
E4	1.6	Understands how her/his work is assessed	2%	15%	29%	54%
E5	1.8	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	2%	19%	33%	46%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:			2.0			

Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment:

It was evident/very evident in 17 percent of classrooms that students understood “how her/his work is assessed” (E4). Instances in which students had “opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback” (E5) were evident/very evident in 21 percent of the classrooms. It was evident/very evident in 33 percent of classrooms that students were asked “about individual progress/learning” (E1). It was evident/very evident in 33 percent of classrooms that students responded to “teacher feedback to improve understanding” (E2). Additionally, it was evident/very evident in 37 percent of the classrooms that students demonstrated or verbalized “understanding of the lesson/content” (E3). Providing opportunities for teachers to share strategies and best practices about formative assessments, rubrics and exemplars, and how to engage students in self-monitoring emerged as leverage points to improve student performance.

F Well-Managed Learning Environment						
Item	Average Rating	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
F1	2.8	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	27%	38%	25%	10%
F2	2.7	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	25%	35%	27%	13%
F3	2.5	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	21%	29%	25%	25%
F4	1.5	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	4%	13%	15%	69%
F5	2.8	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	25%	42%	25%	8%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		2.5				

Well-Managed Learning Environment:

It was evident/very evident in 67 percent of classrooms that students knew "classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences" (F5). It was evident/very evident in 65 percent of classrooms that students spoke and interacted "respectfully with teachers and peers" (F1). It was evident/very evident in 17 percent of classrooms that students collaborated "with other students during student-centered activities" (F4). These observations strongly supported the need for increasing the use of student-centered instruction. The Team noted that most instruction across all schools was largely teacher-centric. Increasing the use of proactive management strategies could improve student behavior.

G. Digital Learning Environment						
Item	Average Rating	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
G1	1.9	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	10%	17%	21%	52%
G2	1.6	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	6%	10%	17%	67%
G3	1.4	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	2%	8%	17%	73%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		1.6				

Digital Learning Environment:

It was evident/very evident in 27 percent of the classrooms that students used "digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning" (G1). It was evident/very evident in 16 percent of classrooms that students used "digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning" (G2). Instances in which students used "digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning" (G3) were evident/very evident in 10 percent of classrooms. In most classrooms, student-centered technology was not the norm. The district developed a robust technology infrastructure (wireless capacity) that can support significantly increased use of technology to supplement the existing curriculum.

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop, implement and monitor a data-supported, district-wide instructional process that addresses curriculum, instruction and assessment to 1) clearly inform students of expectations that must be met to advance to the next grade level, 2) individualize instruction to meet the unique needs of each student and 3) provide equitable and challenging learning experiences so students become college and career ready. The process should include use of exemplars of high quality work, formative assessment of learning to guide modification of instruction and a system of assessment that measures student achievement. (Primary Indicator 3.1, Secondary Indicators 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6)

Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in the addenda of this report, revealed student performance scores for 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 on SC READY and the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) in all content areas to be significantly below state averages. Data for End-of-Course Assessments (EOC) in Algebra I, English I, Biology and United States History were significantly below the state averages in both school years. Student data reflecting students who are "Ready" on the ACT was also significantly below the state average. These data suggested that the district had not established processes and practices that prepared students for college, career and beyond.

Classroom Observation Data:

Classroom observation data, as detailed in the Teaching and Learning Impact section of this report, revealed it was evident/very evident in 43 percent of classrooms that students were tasked "with activities and learning that were challenging but attainable" (B2). It was evident/very evident in 14 percent of classrooms that students were "provided exemplars of high quality work" (B3). Additionally, it was evident/very evident in 21 percent of classrooms that students were "engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/tasks" (B4). Classroom observations further revealed it was evident/very evident in 17 percent of classrooms that students were asked and responded to "questions that require higher order thinking (e.g. applying, evaluating, synthesizing)" (B5). It was evident/very evident in 21 percent of classrooms that students were provided "additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs" (C5). Classroom observation data revealed a significant lack of curriculum and instructional rigor, as well as few differentiated learning opportunities for students.

Stakeholder Survey Data:

Fifty-five percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that "All of my child's teachers provide an equitable curriculum that meets his/her learning needs." Forty-nine percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that teachers met their child's learning needs by individualizing instruction. Thirty-six percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that teachers changed their instructional practices to meet their needs. These data showed few parents and students reported that students were receiving personalized or individualized instruction. Sixty percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that teachers fairly grade and evaluate their work, suggesting that almost half of students are neutral or disagree that teachers assess work fairly.

Stakeholder Interviews:

District administrators were unable to articulate an instructional plan for schools in the district. Several members of the district leadership team discussed their roles; however, the Team found no coherent plan or process for working with priority schools and no description of how district leaders assisted schools to provide quality instruction for students. Many parents expressed frustration with the low level of student academic preparation, and one parent's statement captured the sentiment of several, "Children do well because of what we do with them at home." Parents reported that students were not prepared for the next grade level. One parent stated, "Something has to change, or I am pulling my kids out of this district."

Documents and Artifacts:

A review of documents revealed no evidence of a district-wide plan for curriculum, instruction and assessment. Evidence submitted to the Team by the school included some examples of lesson plans in high school mathematics, a list of requirements to get into Algebra I Honors and English I Honors, a list of grading requirements at all grade-level bands and several screen shots of grade books. The Team found no plan of instructional strategies designed to individualize experiences for students at different ability levels, a common assessment plan or plan to monitor student success.

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 system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commits to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	1.00
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise and communicate a school purpose for student success.	1.00
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking and life skills.	1.00
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	1.00

Standard 2 Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and support practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	1.00
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	1.00
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	1.00
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	1.00
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	1.00
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	1.00

Findings

Improvement Priority

Review and adhere to all board policies, procedures and laws and regulations pertaining to the roles and conduct of the board. Implement defined strategies to allow the board to function as a cohesive unit whose primary focus is on student learning. Implement a process to evaluate board decisions and actions to ensure that they adhere to the following: 1) are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, 2) comply with the adopted code of ethics, 3) are free of conflict of interest, 4) are supportive and respectful of the autonomy of both district and school leadership and 5) benefit student learning. (Primary Indicator 2.2, Secondary Indicators 2.1, 2.3)

Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in the Addenda to this report, revealed the school did not meet state student performance goals in 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. Students scored significantly below state averages (SC READY in grades three through eighth, SCPASS in grades four through eight) in all tested grade levels and subject areas for the past three years. The percentage of students scoring at 70 or above on the End-of-Course assessments was significantly below state averages for the past three years. Despite the chronic underperformance, the board had neither mandated nor developed a plan to improve student performance.

Stakeholder Survey Data:

Stakeholder survey data revealed that 49 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively." Forty-one percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's governing body does not interfere with the operation or leaders of our school." Seventy-six percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statements, "Our school's governing body or school board complies with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations" and "Our school's governing body or school board maintains distinction between its role and responsibilities and those of school leadership." Although there was some discrepancy between the parent and staff member ratings, data indicated that most stakeholders reported the board did not operate responsibly.

Stakeholder Interviews:

District administrators stated that board members frequently impinged on the authority of school and district leadership. Interview data revealed specific examples of board members attempting to influence school and district leadership in personnel matters, as well as other decisions involving the day-to-day operation of the schools and the district. Interview data showed that a perception existed that many positions went unfilled because the board did not approve personnel items during board meetings even though proposed candidates were qualified. Additionally, no board member could articulate a plan of action to assist identified schools to move out of Priority status. Interview data showed that when student performance data presentations were made during board meetings, board members seldom engaged and rarely posed follow up questions.

Documents and Artifacts:

A review of documents (e.g., minutes of board meetings, Policy Manual, Code of Ethics) revealed the board had established policies and procedures pertaining to the role and conduct of its members. However, as noted above, board members frequently did not follow their own policies. Minutes of the October 24, 2016 board meeting indicated that the board attorney had conducted a question and answer session regarding board responsibilities.

Board meeting minutes showed that staff presentations occurred; however, meeting minutes rarely showed evidence that the board had actually discussed the information presented. For example, at the September 26, 2016 meeting a presentation titled "Fall MAP Data Review" was noted in the minutes; however, the Team found no indication that any board discussion had resulted from the presentation. At that same meeting, a parent complained to the board that, "The district has failed the children. Why are students not being educated?" Similarly, the Team found no indication of follow-up to the parent's questions, and there was no indication at the next meeting (October 24, 2016) that anything had been done to address the question.

Minutes from the next regularly scheduled board meeting (October 24, 2016) showed a summary of a board discussion following a staff member data presentation of SC READY results for students in grades three through eight. Several board members asked rhetorical questions or made statements about the need to improve. In addition, a review of meeting minutes showed no indication of any plan or organized actions. A review of meeting minutes for a 12-month period revealed little board involvement with student learning, curriculum and instruction.

Improvement Priority

Develop, implement and monitor a leadership plan and process that ensures decisions and actions focused on continuous improvement are aligned to the district's purpose. This plan and process should also define, support and expect that all personnel maintain high performance standards and hold high performance expectations for all students, and hold all leaders individually and collectively accountable for improving conditions that support student learning. Communicate with appropriate stakeholder groups, solicit feedback and work collaboratively on district improvement efforts. (Primary Indicator 2.4, Secondary Indicator 2.5)

Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in the Addenda of this report, revealed students in the district did not meet state performance goals in 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. Student performance data on all state measures were consistently below the state averages. Despite the chronically underperforming test results and the fact that three of the four schools in the district were designated Priority status, there were no remediation plans developed by leaders to address student learning.

Stakeholder Survey Data:

Survey data showed 83 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school has a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions, and measures of growth." Ninety-four percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that, "Our school's leaders expect staff members to hold all students to high academic standards." Fifty-eight percent of the parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school has high expectations for students in all classes." Similarly, only 55 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My school provides me with challenging curriculum and learning experiences." Seventy-six percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders engage effectively with all stakeholders about the school's purpose and direction." Forty-six percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in the school." Fifty-two percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that, "My school offers opportunities for my family to become involved in school activities and my learning." These data suggested that district and school leadership had not fostered a culture of continuous improvement coupled with stakeholder involvement in all facets of the district. Survey data also showed a wide variance among staff member, parent and student responses.

Stakeholder Interviews:

Interview data revealed district and school leaders could not articulate an improvement plan focused on the development of processes and procedures to assist identified schools move out of Priority school status. When asked about the rigor of instruction, one administrator said, "We don't have quality. We struggle." Board members and parents identified the lack of consistency in leadership throughout the district as a deterrent to district improvement. Interview data revealed that a Response to Intervention (RtI) program with targeted strategies to provide remediation and intervention support had not been developed. Interview data revealed the lack of a professional development plan limited efforts to

provide instructional staff support necessary to implement instruction focused on critical-thinking skill development and rigorous instruction.

Documents and Artifacts:

A review of the district's Instructional Leader's Handbook showed a wide range of information about expectations and guidelines for teacher behavior, evaluation protocols, a lesson template, grading policies and a school leadership team meeting agenda. Documents did not include plans or procedures to ensure that expectations outlined in the handbook were followed. For example, a review of leadership meetings at individual schools indicated that the agenda protocol document included in the handbook was not followed. Student and staff handbooks from all schools were reviewed. All staff handbooks included topics consisting of expectations for behavior, dress, instruction and lesson plans. In addition, staff handbooks included information about Bloom's Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge charts; however, the Team found no procedures to ensure the development of critical-thinking skills was continuously evaluated.

A Five Year Strategic Plan for the district included measurable goals and action steps. Evidence that the action plans had been implemented or monitored was not provided. Individual school renewal plans were available; however, evidence that the plans were monitored for fidelity was not offered. A formal plan to address the Priority status of schools in the district was not found. A Volunteer Handbook, agendas for Open House programs and notices to parents about school activities provided stakeholders with information about school events and opportunities for stakeholder involvement, but the Team found no strategies to solicit input from 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	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools and educational programs.	1.00
4.2	Instructional time, material resources and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs and system operations.	1.00
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services and equipment to provide a safe, clean and healthy environment for all students and staff.	1.20
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	1.00
4.5	The system provides, coordinates and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	1.00
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning and operational needs.	1.60
4.7	The system provides, coordinates and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of the student population being served.	1.00
4.8	The system provides, coordinates and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning needs of all students.	1.00

Findings**Improvement Priority**

Develop, implement and evaluate a systematic process to recruit, employ and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support individual schools and educational programs. (Indicator 4.1)

Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in the attached Addenda, revealed low student achievement across all core content areas from elementary through high school. The district had not met state student performance goals in 2012, 2013 or 2014. In addition, 2015-2016 student performance data were significantly below the state average in all tested areas and resulted in three of four schools being identified as Priority Schools per state guidelines. These data revealed a need to develop a systematic process to employ and retain qualified staff.

Classroom Observation Data:

Classroom observations, as detailed in the Teaching and Learning Impact section of this report, revealed that instances of students engaged "in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks" (B4) were evident/very evident in 21 percent of classrooms. Students were asked and responded "to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)" (B5) in 17 percent of classrooms, and students were provided "additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs" (C5) in 21 percent of classrooms. Instances in which students used "digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning" (G3) were evident/very evident in 10 percent of classrooms.

Stakeholder Survey Data:

Stakeholder survey data suggested little or no agreement among students and parents compared to staff members in any domain. Fifty-eight percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school provides qualified staff members to support student learning." However, 88 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school provides qualified staff members to support student learning." These findings showed a 31 percent discrepancy in staff and parent survey results related to the district's ability to ensure a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff were hired to support the district's purpose, direction and educational program.

Stakeholder Interviews:

Interview data showed a need for qualified staff to ensure the academic achievement of all students. All stakeholders consistently ranked the need for employing and retaining qualified teachers as a critical priority. The Team found no evidence of a comprehensive process to recruit, employ and retain enough qualified professionals. One interviewee stated, "We get the bottom of the barrel when it comes to teachers, because we don't aggressively recruit." Another staff member stated, "There is no incentive to come or stay in Allendale. If I were a teacher, I would not come to Allendale." Parents also communicated that students frequently were provided instruction by long term substitute and international teachers.

Documents and Artifacts:

Documents revealed 52 percent of teachers held advanced degrees, 73 percent of teachers were on continuing contracts, 76 percent of teachers returned from the previous year and 38 percent of classes were not taught by highly qualified teachers per the 2016 South Carolina State Report Card data. Certification data also indicated that one percent of teachers were National Board Certified. The district's Strategic Plan (2.3) articulated a "recruit, employ, and retention plan;" however, interview data reflected the plan was neither implemented nor evaluated. The Team found no documents, framework or process that addressed the lack of quality instruction by certified staff, particularly in core content classes and particularly in the areas of math and science.

Conclusion

Strengths:

Allendale Fairfax is a small school district with approximately 1,200 students in preschool through twelfth grade (Pre-K–12). The district's schools were the only public or private schools located in Allendale County. The small size affords the district an opportunity to develop a strong and effective Pre-K-12 curriculum and instructional process that prepares its students for life after high school.

The district had allocated funds to support its technology infrastructure. Given the district's size and relative geographic isolation, capitalizing upon available technology could increase opportunities for students. Additionally, the district had established dual enrollment agreements with the University of South Carolina, Salkehatchie campus and Denmark Technical College. Both agreements may be leveraged to increase educational opportunities for students.

Continuous Improvement Planning Process:

The district had not established a continuous improvement planning process. There were significant deficiencies in all five Standards and 35 Indicators (31 of 35 Indicators were rated at Level 1). The Team found no evidence that district leadership (board and administration) had attempted to develop a community supported vision, mission, purpose or set of beliefs about student learning. The Team found a lack of a systematic, continuous improvement process within and among schools. The existing culture was not focused on shared values and beliefs about student learning and high quality instruction. The district and its schools had not collaborated on improvement efforts. Current educational programs did not challenge students or help them develop the learning, thinking and life skills needed for success at the next level, including post-graduation. No programs that engaged families in their children's education were identified. District personnel provided parents with minimal information about their child's learning.

Three of the district's four schools were in Priority status under South Carolina Department of Education guidelines due to consistently poor academic preparation and performance of its students. Despite this situation, the Team identified no sense of urgency nor were there any specific plans or processes established to address program needs at each school.

The Team identified significant deficiencies in school board leadership that needed to be addressed. The board often did not adhere to its own policies and procedures for effective administration of the schools. Board practices rarely addressed student learning, effective instruction or assessment that produced equitable and challenging learning experiences for students. There were no documented board practices related to either board or staff professional development needs.

There was no evidence that the board ensured its decisions and actions were free of conflict of interest, were ethical or were related to defined board roles and responsibilities. Governing board members participated in state required board member trainings; however, little evidence was found of the board using the information and skills acquired for the benefit of the district's instructional programs. Board

members frequently attended out-of-state meetings and conferences; however, the Team found no evidence that supported this travel having any direct impact on the district or its students. The board did not grant clear autonomy to the administration or school leadership to accomplish goals for improvement in student learning and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations of the district and its schools. It frequently usurped the autonomy of district or school leadership.

The district administration did not provide evidence of systematic policies and practices that focused on continuous improvement strategies. There were no clear student learning standards promoted and supported by the district administration, nor were there clear staff performance standards. Central office staff members were not a cohesive team. Moreover, no evidence of professional collaboration in support of the district's schools, staffs or students could be found. District administrators rarely or never communicated with stakeholder groups. Administrator supervision and evaluation practices were not uniform and had little focus on improving professional practices. It appeared that there was no use of supervision and evaluation procedures to improve staff performance and student achievement results. District leaders did not monitor instructional practices or use evaluation procedures to ensure that teachers taught the approved curriculum and used content-specific Standards of professional practice.

The district had few systematic processes to support the teaching and learning needs in schools. Staffing in the area of curriculum and instruction was inadequate (one staff member with multiple areas of responsibility) given that three schools were in Priority status. There were nine administrative positions in the central office and most of them were not focused on any action plans to improve and support the schools. No processes were established to ensure a Pre-K–12 curriculum had been established and provided students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills and life skills.

District personnel did not monitor or adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment or alignment with district goals for achievement and instruction. The Team found no district level process to ensure that teachers used instructional strategies that required student collaboration, self-reflection and development of critical thinking skills. Teachers rarely personalized instructional strategies or used instructional strategies that required students to apply knowledge and skills, integrate content and skills with other disciplines and use technologies as instructional resources and learning tools. There was no systematic instructional process that informed students of learning expectations.

The district had not established a coordinated assessment system that generated and used data from multiple assessment measures to directly impact instructional practices. The district had no clearly delineated processes for collecting, analyzing and applying learning from multiple data sources.

The Team found no systematic process to recruit, employ and retain enough qualified professional staff. The Team found no mentoring, coaching or induction programs that were consistent with district values and beliefs about teaching and learning. In addition, the district had not developed a plan for equitable and needs-based distribution of materials and fiscal resources to the schools. There was no strategic

resource management or technology plan; however, the technology infrastructure in the schools was supportive of current digital teaching and learning activities. The district provided little coordination of information resources or related personnel necessary to provide students access to media and information resources. The Team found no support programs to determine the physical, social or emotional needs of students.

The Diagnostic Review Team recognized the large and overwhelming number of Indicators that needed attention in order to significantly improve student outcomes. In a genuine effort to be helpful to the district in the immediate years ahead, the Team identified just four Improvement Priorities as the most critically needed at this point. Two of the Improvement Priorities addressed board and district leadership and administrative needs. One addressed the key area of curriculum, instruction and assessment. The fourth Improvement Priority addressed the need for deliberate and active teacher recruitment practices to be implemented. All four are equally important in that they directly impact one another.

Improvement Priorities:

Develop, implement and monitor a data-supported, district-wide instructional process that addresses curriculum, instruction and assessment to 1) clearly inform students of expectations that must be met to advance to the next grade level, 2) individualize instruction to meet the unique needs of each student and 3) provide equitable and challenging learning experiences so students become college and career ready. The process should include use of exemplars of high quality work, formative assessment of learning to guide modification of instruction and a system of assessment that measures student achievement. **(Primary Indicator 3.1, Secondary Indicators 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6)**

Review and adhere to all board policies, procedures and laws and regulations pertaining to the roles and conduct of the board. Implement defined strategies to allow the board to function as a cohesive unit whose primary focus is on student learning. Implement a process to evaluate board decisions and actions to ensure that they adhere to the following: 1) are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, 2) comply with the adopted code of ethics, 3) are free of conflict of interest, 4) are supportive and respectful of the autonomy of both district and school leadership and 5) benefit student learning. **(Primary Indicator 2.2, Secondary Indicators 2.1, 2.3)**

Develop, implement and monitor a leadership plan and process that ensures decisions and actions focused on continuous improvement are aligned to the district's purpose. This plan and process should also define, support and expect that all personnel maintain high performance standards and hold high performance expectations for all students, and hold all leaders individually and collectively accountable for improving conditions that support student learning. Communicate with appropriate stakeholder groups, solicit feedback and work collaboratively on district improvement efforts. **(Primary Indicator 2.4, Secondary Indicator 2.5)**

Develop, implement and evaluate a systematic process to recruit, employ and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support individual schools and educational programs. **(Indicator 4.1)**

Addenda

Team Roster

Lead Evaluator	Brief Biography
Dr. George Griffin North Carolina	Dr. Griffin holds B.A. and M.Ed. degrees from Duke University. He received his Ph.D. in Special Education from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Primary areas of concentration included the education of students with learning disabilities and/or behavior problems, and educational administration. During his 40-year education career Griffin has been a special education teacher, high school principal, central office program director, state department program director, and university professor. He has extensive experience in alternative school programming; having served as a school director and statewide program director for services for violent and assaultive youth in North Carolina. Griffin has served as the Department Chair in the Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology at North Carolina Central University. He has also served as a Special Education Due Process Hearing Officer in North Carolina. Griffin is the author of several entries in the Encyclopedia of Educational Leadership and Administration as well as a contributor to several special education textbooks and professional journals. Dr. Griffin is an independent educational consultant. He serves as a Lead Evaluator with AdvancED and has lead reviews in numerous schools and school districts throughout the United States and in the Middle East. He was the keynote speaker and a session presenter at the first AdvancED International Learning Disabilities Conference (May, 2013) in Beirut, Lebanon. He has also presented interactive training sessions at AdvancED Global Education Conferences in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.
Team Members	
Milagros Fornell, Associate Lead Evaluator Florida	Milagros Fornell is an educator who has had a powerful impact on her community, students, parents, and peers since her first day as a mathematics teacher in 1978. The 1983 McMillan Mathematics Teacher of the Year went on to chair the Math Department at Hammocks Junior High School and was selected as the 1984 Mathematics District Teacher of the Year. In 2009 she became the Associate Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer for Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) after holding numerous leadership titles within the county. Ms. Fornell's many achievements in this role include the increase of participation and performance of M-DCPS students in Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment courses. Throughout her career, she has served as a school-site administrator, regional curriculum director, and regional superintendent. Her commitment to education has earned her recognitions including the 1998 South Florida Phi Beta Kappa Superior High School Principal award and the Student Services Principal of the Year, Region VI Principal of the Year for 2001, and the 2012 Florida International University (FIU) Torch Award as a distinguished alumnus of the College of Education. She retired in June 2014 as the Chief of Staff for Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho and during her time in this position she oversaw the implementation of the District's Digital Convergence Project.
Sara Ankrapp	Sara Ankrapp began her career in education as a teacher in Louisiana, where

South Carolina	she taught 3rd grade, 6th grade, and high school mathematics. She moved to South Carolina in 1989 and taught middle school math and science in Richland District One for the next eight years. During that time she earned a Master's degree in Educational Leadership. She was an Assistant Principal in Fairfield County School District for three years and an Assistant Principal in Lexington School District Four for seven years. She has been a Principal in Lexington School District Four for the past nine years.
Andress Carter-Sims South Carolina	Andress Carter-Sims serves as the Program Manager for Focus Schools with the South Carolina State Department of Education. She has teaching experience at the elementary level and has taught all grades at the elementary level. Mrs. Carter-Sims has served in elementary schools as a principal and assistant principal. She has also served as a Title I Math and Science Consultant, MAP Assessment Coordinator, and Director for School Improvement. She has extensive experience in data analysis, curriculum and instruction, literacy intervention, professional learning communities and high impact instructional strategies to enhance student achievement. Carter-Sims holds a B.A.I.S. in Early Childhood Education, a Master's degree in Natural Science, and an Ed.S. in Instructional Leadership. She is certified to conduct classroom observations using the AdvancED Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool.
Holly Wingard South Carolina	Holly Wingard has worked in both a large metropolitan school district and in a small rural district in South Carolina. After 34 years, she retired from the school district. She has taught, served as a guidance counselor, senior counselor, testing coordinator, administrative team member, and Advanced Placement coordinator. She has served on SACS/AdvancED review teams for over 25 years, serving as a school Lead Evaluator in South Carolina and in other states. She serves as a consultant to districts preparing for AdvancED reviews. Mrs. Wingard has an undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia and an M.ED from the University of 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.

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Student Performance Data Tables

Percentage of Students Meeting Benchmark of "Meets and Exceeds" on SC READY (Grades 3-8) at the School and in the State (2015-2016)

Content Area by Grade Level	% M&E Grade 3		% M&E Grade 4		% M&E Grade 5		% M&E Grade 6		% M&E Grade 7		% M&E Grade 8		Total School	% Ready State
	E	M	E	M	E	M	E	M	E	M	E	M		
ELA*	15.7		19.7		14.9		12.6		15.9		30.6		18.7	67.9
Math	27.4		9.8		19.0		24.3		12.9		8.4		17.8	46.7
SC READY State Avg.	43.7	53.6	43.4	46.7	41.2	44.3	41	39.5	40.7	34.7	44.7	32.4		

* Includes writing and reading in the composite score; M&E = Meets and Exceeds Expectations

Delta

- ELA and math percentages were significantly below state scores in all grade levels.

Percentages of Students Meeting Grade-Level Standards at the School on the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) by Grade Level (2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016)

	Grade 4			Grade 5			Grade 6			Grade 7			Grade 8		
	2016	2015	2014	2016	2015	2014	2016	2015	2014	2016	2015	2014	2016	2015	2014
Science	30.9	23.1		27.0	30.3		25.3	20.4		24.8	31.6		36.1	15.1	
State Avg. Science	65.0	69.9	69.9	65.7	66.3	68.4	62.1	63.6	65.7	70.6	68.2	73.5	66.2	65.2	69.2
Social Studies	53.1	56.4		29.7	41.6		40.5	36.6		24.8	28.4		54.2	27.6	
State Avg. SS	81.3	85.3	83.7	71.5	71.4	72.0	76.3	77.5	79.3	68.4	67.9	67.4	69.5	73.4	70.1

* Writing, ELA and Math were last tested with SCPASS during the 2013-14 school year

Delta

- Science and social studies percentages are significantly below state scores in all grade levels.

Percentages of Students Scoring at 70 or above on the End-of-Course Assessments at the School and in the State (2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016)

Content Area	% School (15-16)	% State (15-16)	% School (14-15)	% State (14-15)	% School (13-14)	% State (13-14)
Algebra I	53.9	81.9	48.7	85.7	66.7	85.5
English I	49.4	78.5	35.7	75.1	37.2	77
Biology	31.1	75.7	29.8	77.8	27.6	78.7
U.S. History	40.0	71.1	28.3	69.1	24.4	65.3

Delta

- All courses were significantly below state average scores.

Percentage of Students Scoring "Ready" on ACT, Grade 11, at the School and in the State (2014-2015, 2015-2016)

Content Area	Composite School (15-16)	Composite State (15-16)	Composite School (14-15)	Composite State (14-15)
Composite Avg. Scale Score	13.2	18.2	12.7	17.9
English	11.1	39.8	10.7	38.7
Math	14.1	23.5	14.3	21.6
Reading	13.5	29.5	12.7	25.8
Science	13.5	21.2	12.5	17.9

Delta

- Percentage of students scoring "Ready" on ACT was significantly below state averages for both years reported.

Percentage of Students Meeting Platinum, Gold or Silver Threshold on ACT WorkKeys at School and in the State (2014-2016)

	Percentage School 2015-16	Percentage State 2015-16	Percentage School 2014-15	Percentage State 2014-15
Applied Mathematics	33.8	72.4	31.1	71.2
Reading for Information	85.7	93.9	80.3	93.2
Locating Information	53.2	76.8	60.0	87.7

Delta

- Percentage of students meeting Platinum, Gold or Silver threshold on ACT WorkKeys was below state averages in all three areas for both years.

Graduation Rates for the School and State (2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016)

	School 2016	State 2016	School 2015	State 2015	School 2014	State 2014
Graduation Rate (for 4-year adjusted cohort)	78.7	82.6	84.3	80.3	76.0	80
Graduation Rate (for 5-year adjusted cohort)	85.5	83.9	76.0	82	77.9	80.2

Plus

- The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate was above the state average for 2015.
- The five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate was above the state average for 2016.

Stakeholder Feedback Plus/Delta

The Survey Plus/Delta is the Team's brief analysis of 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). Only the most pertinent items supporting the findings of the Diagnostic Review are listed. This is not an exhaustive listing of items from all stakeholder feedback surveys.

Teaching and Learning Impact

(Standards 3 and 5)

+ Plus: (minimum of 90 percent agreed/strongly agreed)

1. 94 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school uses data to monitor student readiness and success at the next level."
2. 90 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school use a process to inform students of their learning expectations and standards of performance."

Δ Delta: (less than 70 percent agreed/strongly agreed)

1. 36 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs."
2. 66 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, a formal process is in place to support new staff members in their professional practice."

Leadership Capacity

(Standards 1 and 2)

+ Plus: (minimum of 90 percent agreed/strongly agreed)

1. 94 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders expect staff members to hold all students to high academic standards."
2. 93 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school leaders monitor data related to school continuous improvement goals."

Δ Delta: (less than 70 percent agreed/strongly agreed)

1. 55 percent of staff students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My school provides me with challenging curriculum and learning experiences."
2. 47 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school has established goals and a plan for improving student learning."

Resource Utilization

(Standard 4)

+ Plus: (minimum of 90 percent agreed/strongly agreed)

1. 90 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides a plan for the acquisition and support of technology to support student learning."
2. 66 percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, a formal process is in place to support new staff members in their professional practice."

Δ Delta: (less than 70 percent agreed/strongly agreed)

1. 52 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides qualified staff members to support student learning."
2. 57 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."

Diagnostic Review Schedule**Tuesday – February 21, 2017**

Time	Event	Where	Who
3:30 p.m.	Team Meeting	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:30 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.	Principal / Superintendent Overview	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members
5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #1	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Wednesday – February 22, 2017

Time	Event	Where	Who
8:00 a.m.	Team arrives at central office	District	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:00a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Superintendent's Interview	District	Diagnostic Review Team Members
9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Stakeholder interviews (see attachment)	District	Diagnostic Review Team Members
11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch – Team Members eat when it can fit into their individual schedules	District	
11:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Continued interviews (see attachment)	Schools/District	Diagnostic Review Team Members (working in pairs or as individuals)
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel and has dinner on their own		
6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #2	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Thursday – February 23, 2017

Time	Event	Where	Who
8:00 a.m.	Team arrives at middle school/high school	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:00a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Continue interviews and artifact reviews, school observations	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
1:00 pm	Central Office	District	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #3 (Agenda provided by Lead Evaluator)	Hotel Conference	Diagnostic Review Team

		Room	Members
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Friday – February 24, 2017

Time	Event	Where	Who
8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Final Team Work Session	District	Diagnostic Review Team Members

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In the Supreme Court

APPEAL FROM LEE COUNTY
Court of Common Pleas

RECEIVED

JUL 12 2017

Thomas W. Cooper, Jr., Circuit Court Judge S.C. SUPREME COURT

Appellate Case No. 2007-065159

Abbeville County School District, *et al.*,

Appellants-Respondents,

vs.

The State of South Carolina, *et al.*, of whom
Hugh K. Leatherman, as President Pro Tempore
of the Senate and as a representative of the
South Carolina Senate, and James H. Lucas,
as Speaker of the House of Representatives and
as a representative of The South Carolina House
of Representatives,
are

Respondents-Appellants,

and

The State of South Carolina, Henry D. McMaster,
as Governor of the State of South Carolina,
are

Respondents.

Proof of Service

I certify that I have served Respondent-Appellant James H. Lucas' Supplemental Petition to Vacate Continuing Jurisdiction or, in the Alternative, Dismiss the South Carolina House of Representatives as a Respondent on the following by email and by placing a copy in the U.S. Mail,

postage prepaid, to all counsel and parties of record on July 12, 2017, at the addresses shown below:

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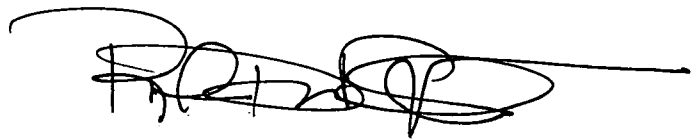
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Columbia, South Carolina
July 12, 2017