DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW REPORT

FOR

CHESTNUT OAKS MIDDLE SCHOOL

1200 Oswego Highway
Sumter, South Carolina
29153-8706

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Principal

April 17 – 20, 2016

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Table of Contents

Introduction 4
Results 7
Teaching and Learning Impact 7
Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning 9
Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement 10
Student Performance Diagnostic 10
Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) 10
eleot™ Summary Statement 11
eleot™ Analysis by Learning Environment 12
Findings 20
Leadership Capacity 23
Standard 1 Purpose and Direction 24
Standard 2 Governance and Leadership 24
Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic 25
Findings 26
Resource Utilization 31
Standard 4 Resource and Support System 31
Conclusion 33
Team Roster 37
About AdvancED 39
References 40
Student Performance Data Tables 42
Stakeholder Survey Plus/Delta 44
Diagnostic Review Team Schedule 47

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.

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Use of Diagnostic Tools

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

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

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

Powerful Practices

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

Improvement Priorities

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

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

The Review

Chestnut Oaks Middle School in Sumter, South Carolina, hosted a Diagnostic Review on April 17 – 20, 2016. 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 appreciation to the staff and stakeholders of Chestnut Oaks Middle School for the warm welcome throughout the visit. The school is commended for the assistance provided in preparing for the visit, the prompt response to the Team's varied requests and the commitment to the Diagnostic Review process.

Prior to the start of the Diagnostic Review, the Team engaged in conference calls and various communications through e-mails to complete the initial intensive study, review and analysis of various documents provided by the school. The Lead Evaluator conducted several conference calls with the principal. School leaders planned and conducted the Internal Review. The comprehensive Internal Review engaged several stakeholder groups and was completed and submitted for review by the Diagnostic Review Team in a timely manner. Evidence and documentation to support the school's Self Assessment and other diagnostics were made available electronically prior to arriving on-site, with some artifacts being provided as hard copies upon arrival.

The Team interviewed 107 stakeholders and observed 17 classrooms during the Diagnostic Review. Throughout the visit, school leaders, faculty and staff were thoughtful in their reflections and open in discussing their continuous improvement efforts at Chestnut Oaks Middle School.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Administrators	3
Instructional Staff	24
Support Staff	19
Students	57
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	4
TOTAL	**107**

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

Results

Teaching and Learning Impact

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
3.1	The school's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	2.20
3.2	Curriculum, instruction and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	1.20
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.40
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	1.00
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	2.00
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	1.80
3.7	Mentoring, coaching and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	1.00
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	2.40
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	1.60
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	2.40
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	1.40
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	1.60

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Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	2.40
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.	1.80
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation and use of data.	1.40
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness and success at the next level.	1.40
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	1.40

Student Performance Diagnostic

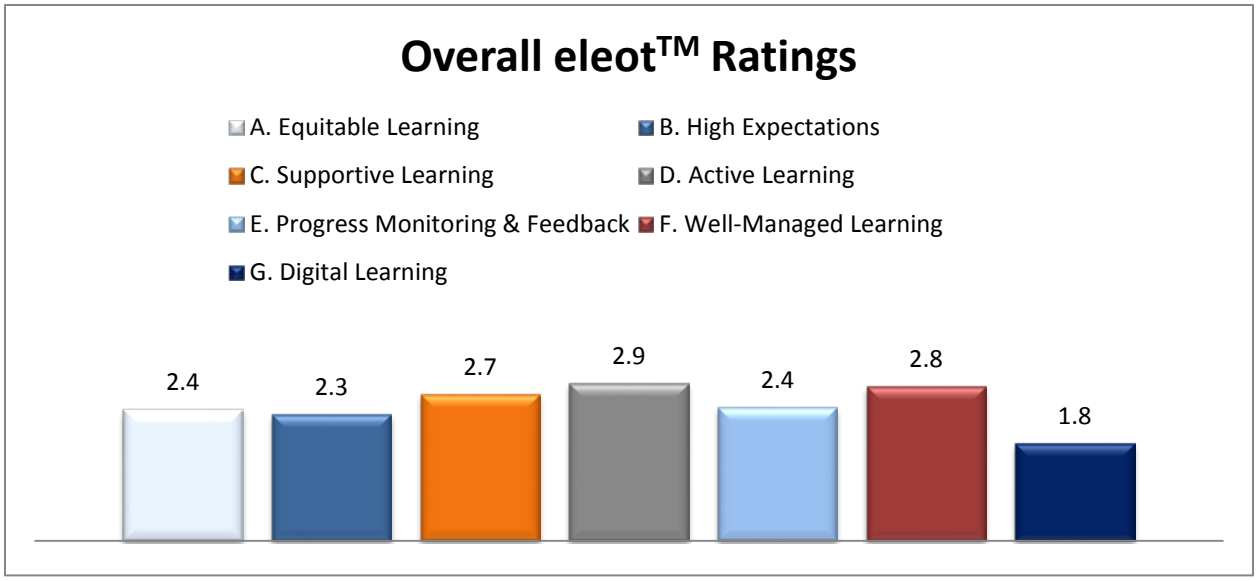
The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important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

Evaluative Criteria	Average Team Rating
1. Assessment Quality	3.00
2. Test Administration	3.00
3. Quality of Learning	1.80
4. Equity of Learning	1.60

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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

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



eleot™ Summary Statement

The Diagnostic Review Team for Chestnut Oaks Middle School conducted 17 classroom observations using the eleot™ classroom observation tool. All core content classes were observed. Team members visited classrooms at different times during the day, observing the beginning, middle and end of lessons. Classroom teachers were aware of the visits and welcomed team members to their classes.

Classroom observation data revealed that the Active Learning Environment received the highest average rating of 2.9 on a four-point scale. The Digital Learning Environment received the lowest average rating of 1.8 on a four-point scale, which is significant, considering that the school has implemented a 1:1 digital device initiative for students.

Observation data revealed a heavy reliance on traditional, teacher-centered instruction, in which students were primarily passive listeners or observers. In some cases, students appeared to be inattentive but demonstrated that they were engaged when called upon by the teacher or when they asked questions about the lesson. Instances in which students were provided alternative instruction, differentiated learning activities or rigorous coursework occurred infrequently.

eleot™ Analysis by Learning Environment

A. Equitable Learning Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
A.1	**2.0**	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	6%	29%	24%	41%
A.2	**3.1**	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	29%	47%	24%	0%
A.3	**2.9**	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	35%	29%	29%	6%
A.4	**1.6**	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	18%	0%	6%	76%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.4**				

Equitable Learning Environment

The Equitable Learning Environment received an average rating of 2.4 on a four-point scale. This rating was greatly impacted by item A4, which states, students have "ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences." The item received an average rating of 1.6 on a four-point scale and was evident/very evident in only 18 percent of classrooms. The low rating for this item is noteworthy, suggesting the need to increase the frequency in which students are exposed to such opportunities.

Occasions in which students had "differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs" (A1) were evident/very evident in only 35 percent of classrooms, with an average rating of 2.0 on a four-point scale. These data coincided with the staff survey results, which indicated that 43 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of students." However, parent survey results showed that 89 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my child's teachers meet his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction." The disparity noted between parents' perceptions and those of teachers was significant. The data suggest a definite need for staff to focus on differentiated instructional strategies to assist students in becoming more successful.

B. High Expectations Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
B.1	**2.6**	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	24%	29%	35%	12%
B.2	**2.4**	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	12%	29%	41%	18%
B.3	**1.8**	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	12%	12%	18%	59%
B.4	**2.2**	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	12%	24%	41%	24%
B.5	**2.5**	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	18%	41%	18%	24%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.3**				

High Expectations Learning Environment

Observation data for the High Expectations Learning Environment revealed that students were not "engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, or tasks" (B4), as evidenced by an average rating of 2.2 on a four-point scale. In addition, data showed that students were not "provided exemplars of high quality work," (B3), as this item received an average rating of 1.8 and was evident/very evident in only 24 percent of classrooms. In 41 percent of classrooms, students were "tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (B2), with a rating of 2.4 on a four-point scale.

Student survey results indicated that 65 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My school provides me with challenging curriculum and learning experiences." Data from staff surveys revealed that 51 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, challenging curriculum and learning experiences provide equity for all students in the development of learning, thinking and life skills." Conversely, 93 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my child's teachers give work that challenges my child."

Staff and student perceptions of teacher expectations were more comparable to the observation data than parents' perceptions. Each of the aforementioned items in this Learning Environment represents a possible leverage point for improvement in instructional practices through staff development and mentoring programs.

C. Supporting Learning Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
C.1	**2.9**	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	24%	41%	35%	0%
C.2	**2.8**	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	24%	35%	41%	0%
C.3	**2.9**	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	24%	47%	24%	6%
C.4	**2.8**	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	24%	35%	41%	0%
C.5	**2.0**	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	6%	18%	47%	29%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.7**				

Supportive Learning Environment

The Supportive Learning Environment received an average rating of 2.7 on a four-point scale. The item receiving the lowest rating for this environment (2.0 on a four-point scale) was C5, indicating that students were not "provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs." Observers found item C5 to be evident/very evident in only 24 percent of classrooms. The items receiving the highest average ratings of 2.9 on a four-point scale were items C1 and C3. These data showed that in 65 percent of classrooms, students demonstrated or expressed "that learning experiences are positive" (C1). Similarly, in 71 percent of classrooms, students took "risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)" (C3).

The 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate Survey data revealed that 49 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My teachers help students when they do not understand something." Forty-three percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of students." Conversely, 89 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All my child's teachers meet his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction." With the disparity in parent responses and those from staff and students, the Team considered this item as a potential leverage point to enhance student support and achievement.

D. Active Learning Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
D.1	**3.2**	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	41%	35%	24%	0%
D.2	**2.5**	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	24%	29%	24%	24%
D.3	**2.9**	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	18%	59%	24%	0%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.9**				

Active Learning Environment

The Active Learning Environment received the highest average rating of 2.9 on a four-point scale. The item receiving the highest average rating for this Learning Environment (3.2 on a four-point scale) was D1, which states, students have "several opportunities to engage in discussions with teachers and classmates." Although the majority of the lessons observed were teacher-centric, item D1 was evident/very evident in 76 percent of classrooms. The majority of students were provided opportunities to engage in discussions during instruction (e.g., responding to questions and listening to the teacher).

Instances in which students made "connections from content to real-life experiences" (D2) were limited, with the practice being evident/very evident in 53 percent of the classrooms. Opportunities for students to become "actively engaged in the learning activities" (D3) were evident/very evident in 77 percent of classrooms. Most of the students readily participated in classroom activities. However, the Team was concerned about the 23 percent of students who were not authentically engaged and the fact that instruction was mainly teacher-centered. Survey data revealed that 48 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school regularly use instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection and development of critical thinking skills." The Team considers this finding a possible leverage point for enhancing student engagement and success.

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
E.1	**2.5**	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	18%	29%	35%	18%
E.2	**2.6**	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	18%	35%	41%	6%
E.3	**2.7**	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	12%	47%	41%	0%
E.4	**2.0**	Understands how her/his work is assessed	12%	24%	18%	47%
E.5	**2.4**	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	18%	18%	47%	18%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.4**				

Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment

The Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment received an average rating of 2.4 on a four-point scale. Observers noted that students were provided opportunities to "demonstrate or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content" (E3) in 59 percent of the classrooms. This item received the highest average rating for this learning environment, which was 2.7 on a four-point scale.

Observation data showed that it was evident/very evident in 47 percent of classrooms that students were "asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning" (E1). State survey results indicated that 49 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My teachers want me to understand what I am learning, not just remember facts." These data are similar, marking a distinct leverage point for further improvement.

Opportunities in which students demonstrated that they "understood how their work is assessed" (E4) were limited, with a 2.0 rating on a four-point scale. Observers found that 54 percent of classrooms showed some evidence of this component. Student survey results indicated that 69 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my teachers fairly grade and evaluate my work." This finding was somewhat similar to staff survey data, which revealed that 73 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school use consistent common grading and reporting policies across grade levels and courses based on clearly defined criteria."

Occasions in which students had "opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback" (E5) were evident/very evident in only 36 percent of classrooms. Opportunities for students to respond "to teacher feedback to improve understanding" (E2) were evident/very evident in 53 percent of classrooms. Considering the importance of providing feedback to students, this entire learning environment is a potential leverage point for continued improvement.

F. Well-Managed Learning Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
F.1	**3.1**	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	35%	41%	24%	0%
F.2	**3.0**	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	35%	29%	35%	0%
F.3	**2.8**	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	29%	29%	29%	12%
F.4	**2.2**	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	24%	18%	18%	41%
F.5	**3.0**	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	29%	41%	29%	0%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**2.8**				

Well-Managed Learning Environment

With an average rating of 2.8 on a four-point scale, the Well-Managed Learning Environment received the second highest rating of all seven Learning Environments. Observers found it was evident/very evident in 76 percent of classrooms that students spoke and interacted "respectfully with teachers and peers" (F1). Students were observed raising their hands, staying on-task and showing respect for the teacher and other students. Students knew classroom routines and behavioral expectations.

Instances in which students were provided opportunities to collaborate "with other students during student-centered activities" (F4) were evident/very evident in 42 percent of classrooms. Opportunities for students to demonstrate that they knew "classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences" (F5) were evident/very evident in 70 percent of classrooms. Similarly, survey data indicated that 71 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my teachers explain their expectations for learning and behavior so I can be successful."

However, data from the 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate Survey showed that only 18 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Students at my school behave well in class.” Parent responses to this survey indicated that 24 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Students at my child's school are well-behaved.” Data from the teacher survey revealed that 23 percent of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Students at my school behave well in class.”

The disparity between the classroom observation data and perception from School Climate Survey data is significant. Observers shared that student misbehavior was generally noticed in hallways, with some students commenting to other students to “be respectful” because visitors were in the building. The Team considered these data to be significant, providing a good leverage point for staff to further assess student behavior and its effect on student achievement and the school’s improvement efforts.

G. Digital Learning Environment						
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
G.1	**1.9**	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	18%	18%	6%	59%
G.2	**1.9**	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	18%	18%	6%	59%
G.3	**1.5**	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	12%	6%	0%	82%
Overall rating on a four-point scale:		**1.8**				

Digital Learning Environment

The Digital Learning Environment received the lowest average score of all Learning Environments, with a 1.8 rating on a four-point scale. Instances in which students were provided opportunities to use digital tools “to gather, evaluate and/or use information for learning” (G1) and “to conduct research, solve problems and/or create original works for learning” (G2) were evident/very evident in 36 percent of classrooms. Opportunities for students to use “digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning” (G3) were evident/very evident in only 18 percent of classrooms.

Staff survey results indicated that 68 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school provides a plan for the acquisition and support of technology to support student learning.” Similarly, student responses to the 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate Survey indicated that 44 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “I use computers and

other technology at my school to help me learn." Forty-six percent of teachers responding to the School Climate Survey agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school has sufficient computers for instructional use."

Because the school implemented a 1:1 digital device initiative for students, the Team considered these data to be significant in helping the school reassess the use of technology in the instructional program, ensuring that adequate training is provided for students and staff in the appropriate use of these tools.

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop, implement and evaluate a data-driven, comprehensive professional development plan that incorporates training for administrative, instructional and support staff in the evaluation, interpretation and use of data to inform instruction, as well as other areas identified by staff to support school-wide improvement initiatives aligned with the school's purpose and direction.
(Primary Indicator 3.11, Secondary Indicator 5.3)

Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in an attachment of this report, indicated that Chestnut Oaks Middle School scored lower than the state average across all subject areas on the 2014-2015 ACT Aspire. When compared to state results, Chestnut Oaks Middle School scored markedly lower in English (49 percent vs. 68 percent), reading (18 percent vs. 37 percent) and mathematics (15 percent vs. 47 percent). While writing scores were close to the state average (20 percent vs. 24 percent), only 20 percent of students were characterized as "Ready." The lowest performance was in eighth grade math, with nine percent Ready, and seventh grade math, with 11 percent "Ready." The highest performance was in sixth grade English, with 49 percent "Ready" and eighth grade English, with 55 percent "Ready."

Classroom Observation Data:

Classroom observation data, as detailed in the Teaching and Learning Impact Section of this report, revealed that students were not effectively and consistently provided differentiated learning opportunities. Data also revealed that instances in which students "were engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions and/or tasks" (B4) were evident/very evident in only 36 percent of classrooms.

Observers also noted that, although students had Chromebooks through the 1:1 digital device initiative, they were not used often during classroom instruction. Teachers did not have Chromebooks and were not provided appropriate training to effectively integrate these technological tools in the instructional program.

The Team also observed that some core extension classes were ineffective, as some teachers did not provide structured activities or monitor student work during this time. Other teachers took students outside for physical activity as opposed to providing additional "time on task." The Team did not observe the administration circulating the campus on a regular basis to monitor classes.

Stakeholder Survey Data:

A review of staff survey data revealed that professional development activities offered did not build capacity among staff. Only 35 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, a professional learning program is designed to build capacity among all professional and support staff members." Staff survey data also indicated that 51 percent of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, all staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning." Forty-seven percent of teachers responding to the 2015 South Carolina Department of Education School Climate Survey agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "There are

relevant professional development opportunities offered to teachers at my school." Thirty-three percent of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school ensures all staff members are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data." These data confirmed statements during stakeholder interviews, indicating that staff were not proficient in the use of data to foster school improvement, thus confirming the need for a comprehensive professional development plan.

Stakeholder Interviews:

Statements during teacher interviews suggested that a plethora of professional development (PD) occurred, with one teacher stating, "I have more PD than I ever thought possible." However, other staff interviewed described the school's professional development as "non-beneficial, boring, haphazard and ineffective."

Teachers and support staff were unclear as to how and why many programs, products and professional development activities were selected and initiated, stating that such decisions were made by the administration with very little planning or communication with staff. Staff also indicated that new programs and initiatives were sometimes implemented prior to scheduling professional development sessions for staff.

Another initiative described as "ineffective, a waste or hastily implemented" was the core extension class, which was designed to provide more instructional time for students in English/language arts and math. Teachers indicated that the decision to implement the core extension class was communicated to them one week prior to the beginning of school, with no professional development, expectations, or structure provided. Teachers explained that some core extension classes had too many students with too many specific needs to provide academic support for all, resulting in various methods of implementation, as many teachers modified their classes as the year progressed.

The Team was informed by staff that data usually were not used to enhance improvement efforts, establish programs, determine training sessions or evaluate effectiveness. One example cited by staff was ineffective, inconsistent discipline management. Teachers and support staff indicated that a structured plan for behavioral interventions and discipline was non-existent. One teacher described a scenario in which numerous students informed the teacher that two students were planning to fight. Although the teacher informed the administration, no administrative action was taken and the fight ensued.

Statements during interviews with teachers and support staff revealed that teachers had the autonomy to issue discipline referrals with no parameters. According to staff, some teachers were sensitive to students and had the skills and disposition to effectively manage student behavior. Other teachers were described as being quick to refer students for disciplinary action, supporting punitive consequences. Statements during staff interviews suggested that the administration did not establish guidelines for classroom management, did not enforce rules, did not follow-through on referrals and did not show consistency in managing discipline schoolwide. In addition, staff shared that the administration did not provide training or support for teachers having a high number of referrals or for those with severe

classroom behavioral issues. Staff indicated that the inconsistencies and slow responses of the administration in dealing with discipline issues had resulted in a loss of valuable instructional time and a feeling of futility among teachers.

Leadership Capacity

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress towards its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its institutional purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to enact strategies to improve results of student learning.

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

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

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

AdvancED's experience gained through evaluation of best practices has indicated that a successful institution has leaders who are advocates for the institution's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and

shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The institution's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Standard 1 Purpose and Direction

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

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	1.40
1.2	The school leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking and life skills.	1.00
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	1.20

Standard 2 Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and support practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	1.80
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	2.40
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	2.60
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	1.20
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	1.40
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	1.00

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

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

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

Evaluative Criteria	Average Team Rating
1. Questionnaire Administration	3.00
2. Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	2.00

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate (with fidelity) systematic structures that outline procedures and protocols to establish a positive school culture that 1) promotes consistency in professional practices (e.g., communication, daily routines, collaboration, supervision and student discipline), 2) includes clearly defined behavioral guidelines, 3) focuses on high academic expectations and 4) supports the school's jointly developed purpose and belief statements.
(Primary Indicator 1.2, Secondary Indicator 2.4)

Student Performance Data:

A review of student performance data revealed that on the ACT Aspire assessment, 49 percent of students scored at the "Ready" levels in English, as compared to 68 percent of the students statewide performing at these levels. In the area of math, 15 percent of students scored at the "Ready" levels as compared with 47 percent of students statewide. Reading scores indicated 18 percent of students scored at the "Ready" levels, compared with 37 percent of students statewide. A summary of student performance data is included as an attachment to this report.

Classroom Observation Data:

Classroom observation data, as detailed in the Teaching and Learning Impact section of this report, revealed that instances in which students were "tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (B2) were evident/very evident in 41 percent of classrooms. Instances in which students were "engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions and/or tasks" (B4) were evident/very evident in 36 percent of classrooms. Occasions in which students were "provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs" (C5) were evident/very evident in 24 percent of classrooms. These data support the need to provide more challenging learning experiences for students.

Stakeholder Survey Data:

Survey data revealed 66 percent of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's purpose statement is based on shared values and beliefs that guide decision making." Sixty-nine percent of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's purpose statement is supported by policies and practices adopted by the school board or governing body."

The data also showed 51 percent of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, challenging curriculum and learning experiences provide equity for all students in the development of learning." Sixty-five percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My school provides me with challenging curriculum and learning experiences." State survey data revealed that 39 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My classes are challenging (not too easy; they make me think)." Fifty-four percent of teachers responding to the state survey agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "The school administration sets high standards for students."

Stakeholder survey data also revealed that 38 percent of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school’s leaders hold themselves accountable for student learning.” Forty-six percent of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school’s leaders support an innovative and collaborative culture.” In addition, 58 percent of teachers agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school has a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions, and measures of growth.” State survey data revealed that 46 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “The school administration provides effective instructional leadership.” State survey data also showed that 83 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “The principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.”

Stakeholder Interviews:

Statements during teacher interview sessions suggested that the school culture is not based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning. One staff member stated, “The climate is not the best that it can be. The culture is toxic and it used to be different here.” Although the Team observed students generally behaving during classroom observations, teachers and support staff indicated that students were disrespectful because discipline matters were not handled immediately by the administrative staff. One teacher indicated that there were occasions when “weeks pass before a discipline referral is addressed.” District staff confirmed that discipline referrals for the school were not handled in a timely fashion.

When asked about opportunities for staff to provide input in decision-making, one staff member stated that decisions were made by the administration. She further stated, “How can you have an open door policy when you don’t open the door? Open door policy…not! This school is struggling!”

Discussions during staff interviews continuously referenced the lack of communication from the administrative staff. Teachers and support staff expressed the desire for more consistent communication regarding student behavioral expectations, discipline procedures, professional development planning and follow-through, expectations for teachers regarding their responsibilities and performance, and daily routines and schedules to foster a cohesive unit in supporting the school’s purpose and direction.

Teachers and support staff also expressed that the administration had not provided collaboratively developed, schoolwide procedures and protocols which define expectations to enhance consistency and efficiency in carrying out day-to-day operations of the school. Teachers continuously reiterated concerns regarding disciplinary issues, stating how classroom disruptions prevented them from providing meaningful learning activities for students. Teachers and support staff expressed frustration regarding the perceived lack of clear and consistent expectations for student behavior in classrooms and hallways.

Students and parents who participated in interview sessions also shared concerns regarding the lack of discipline in the building. Parents also indicated concerns about the lack of communication from the administration.

Documents and Artifacts:
A review of the school's Self Assessment stated that the school's vision and mission statements were discussed during a staff meeting at the end of the 2014-2015 school year, with a decision that the two statements would remain the same for the 2015-2016 school year. The Self Assessment indicated the need "to involve stakeholders in finalizing the school's vision and mission," which suggested that stakeholder involvement in developing the current statements was minimal. Stakeholder involvement in developing the statements could potentially increase staff morale. The Self Assessment also stated, "Constant communication is critical to the success of the school's operation." Stakeholders, however, confirmed that communication is lacking.

The Team also reviewed the school's 2015 South Carolina State Report Card, which indicated that 67 percent of teachers returned to the school during the 2014-2015 school year; 68 percent returned during the 2013-2014 school year; and 72 percent returned for the 2012-2013 school year.

The school's mission and vision statements were displayed in the foyer of the administration building. Team Members observed that the school's theme of "SOAR" was displayed throughout the school. SOAR is an acronym for "Seek excellence, Opt to use good manners, Activate listening and learning skills, Respect self and others." These guidelines denoted that these traits are expected to be applied by all students and adults in the school.

Improvement Priority

Develop, implement, document and administer a formal, comprehensive process to supervise, evaluate, monitor and support improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success. (Primary Indicator 2.6, Secondary Indicator 3.4)

Stakeholder Survey Data:

Stakeholder survey data revealed that only 27 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders ensure all staff members use supervisory feedback to improve student learning." Staff survey data also revealed that 38 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders regularly evaluate staff members on criteria designed to improve teaching and learning." In the extended response portion of the surveys, one staff member stated that the leadership and a lack of feedback from the peer mentor/coach was what he/she liked least about the school. State survey data revealed that 46 percent of staff agreed with the statement, "The school administration communicates clear instructional goals for the school."

Stakeholder interviews:

Statements during teacher interviews suggested the need for clear and formal processes for supervision and feedback. Teachers confirmed that supervision and evaluation processes were random and rarely used to improve teaching and learning. Some teachers indicated that they rarely receive feedback on instructional practices. Teachers also shared that there had been no discussions or professional development to assist staff in using data to enhance student achievement and success. The administration indicated that more eleot™ classroom observations were being conducted and feedback was being provided.

Teachers expressed numerous concerns regarding teacher perceptions of the school's administration. One concern related to the perceived lack of visibility of administrators in the hallways, cafeteria and classrooms. One department head mentioned that the school leader stopped attending department and team meetings. Another stated that she was still awaiting feedback from an ADEPT (Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating professional Teaching) evaluation that was completed in February 2016. Teachers also shared that professional learning communities (PLC's) were established previously but were ineffective. One teacher stated that instructional time is "promoted but not protected" by the administration.

During the principal's interview, the Team was informed that some teachers left the school because they did not want to be monitored, as her leadership philosophy focused on "inspecting what is expected." The principal indicated that "administrative walkthroughs" were conducted periodically but not often enough, confirming that classroom teachers wanted administrative staff in their classrooms more often.

During the principal's overview, students and staff were described as "unmotivated." Statements during the principal's interview suggested that the tension on campus resulted from outspoken but ineffective teachers. The principal expressed the need to have teachers in her building who "understand that there

is a vision and are a part of it." In addition, the high teacher turnover rate was mentioned, with a comment indicating that the more effective teachers were hired at other schools.

Documents and Artifacts:
While reviewing essential documents and artifacts, the Team found no evidence of a formal process used by the administration to supervise, evaluate, monitor or support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers. Team Members searched for a school procedures manual or other documentation outlining a process for monitoring instructional practices but were unable to find such a document.

The school's Self Assessment indicated that teachers were "evaluated formally each year and informally on a daily basis." This document also indicated, "We will continue to ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning are facilitated through collaboration, shared ideas, and monitored practices." These statements contradict survey data and reports from teachers and support staff.

The Self Assessment also stated that PLC's would continue to be used, with "a plan in place when learning communities cannot physically meet." However, staff comments and survey data revealed that the PLC's were ineffective and not implemented with fidelity.

Resource Utilization

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

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

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

Standard 4 Resource and Support System

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

Indicator	Description	Average Team Rating
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction and the educational program.	2.60
4.2	Instructional time, material resources and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	2.60
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services and equipment to provide a safe, clean and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.80
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	2.40
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning and operational needs.	1.80
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social and	2.20

	emotional needs of the student population being served.	
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning needs of all students.	2.40

Conclusion

Following numerous discussions with students, staff and administrators, the Team determined that the school's strengths focus on its human, material and fiscal resources. The most obvious strength is the facility, as it provides space for growth both inside the building and on the surrounding acreage. Staff indicated that adequate resources were provided for students and staff, including digital devices for each student.

Another strength is the school's staff, who were very warm and welcoming. When asked to share the best thing about the school, all staff members responded with either "the staff" or "the students." The Team found the office staff to be friendly, professional and caring. Custodial and cafeteria staff were committed to their work, expressing a great deal of pride in their accomplishments. Support staff were concerned about the students and staff, expressing hopefulness for positive change. Teachers demonstrated care, concern and support for the students, sharing that students could excel with enhanced discipline strategies.

The school provided a fully-staffed guidance department consisting of two certified counselors, one career specialist, a character education paraprofessional and a guidance secretary, all who worked collaboratively to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of the student population. Staff also provided services that support counseling, referral, educational and career planning needs of students. Team observations of guidance staff reflected a guidance team that worked in tandem for the benefit of students.

In spite of the reported cases of unresolved discipline issues and the teacher-centric classrooms, the Team observed students being actively engaged in the lessons. Various instructional resources were available for staff to use to enhance student success. In addition, instructional staff provided appropriate support to assist students in understanding the core content material, as noted in observation data.

The school used multiple assessment systems to generate a variety of data regarding student learning. These assessments included the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Training and Education in the 21st Century (TE21) and Mastery Connect, state assessments and USA Test Prep. However, statements during teacher and support staff interviews revealed that test data were not used to monitor and guide continuous improvement. Although the data sources were plentiful and available, staff confirmed that the information is not used to determine professional development offerings, evaluate program effectiveness, or review organizational conditions.

The students and staff of Chestnut Oaks Middle School experienced numerous changes during the past few years, shifting from a successful educational environment to one in dire need of assistance. Statements from stakeholders indicated that these changes have taken a toll on students and staff, resulting in feelings of gloom and despair. When asked to describe the culture of the school, stakeholders used terms such as, "medium, mediocre, confusing, basic, tiring, potential, misunderstood,

struggling, a hidden gem, toxic." Other statements expressed regarding the school culture included the following: "My heart hurts for the staff, my colleagues." "It used to feel like family." "If they can unite the staff, we could go in the right direction."

These comments expressed the sentiments of the great majority of stakeholders interviewed at the school. In essence, staff morale was extremely low. Students interviewed were unhappy and staff were stressed. In addition to the low staff morale, student misbehavior and the perceived lack of communication by the administration were identified by staff as major issues of concern. Teachers, support staff, students and parents expressed concerns in one or more of these three areas.

The principal acknowledged these concerns during the principal's overview presentation and during the principal's interview, sharing the strategies implemented to address the issues. The principal described the school's culture as being "toxic," citing changes in instructional staff and outspoken teachers as the cause. The principal also expressed the need to strengthen the relationship between the administration and staff.

The Team determined that the school had three assistant principals in the past three years due to perceived conflicts between the administrative staff. Discussions with district administrative staff revealed that the principal requested the changes in assistant principals to enhance the effectiveness of the leadership team. However, teachers and support staff shared that, over the past three years, the school culture and morale deteriorated greatly, moving from a school with a positive, nurturing, family environment to one of distrust and dissention.

The principal indicated that the school's leadership team had been reorganized to include guidance counselors. With this change, the leadership team included the administration, department heads, grade-level leaders, the instructional coach and guidance counselors.

In addition to restructuring the leadership team, the administration added a core extension class, designed to provide additional instruction for students in English/language arts and math. The principal shared that some teachers did not like the core extension class, citing the process used to establish it as a concern. The principal also stated that the process was not "set in stone," as students were to go to the teachers who could provide the assistance needed. However, some students considered it ineffective, with one student saying, "It's a waste of time!" Several teachers and support staff concurred that the time could be better used. One teacher indicated that the time was used to provide outside activities for students, like an additional recess. A staff member stated, "The class is not structured and teachers don't like it."

The master schedule was also rearranged, moving from a department structure to a grade-level structure. Some students indicated that the new schedule was confusing, and staff expressed discontent because the class periods were shorter this school year, changing from 60 minutes to 52 minutes.

One of the major concerns shared by teachers and support staff was the perceived exclusion of stakeholders in decision-making processes. Teachers and support staff stated that they were not provided the opportunity to share input prior to the implementation of these and other school initiatives. Staff expressed frustration regarding the numerous changes made in the daily operations of the school without stakeholder input.

To address the issue of student behavior, the administration implemented the "refocus" plan. Refocus was designed to assist with managing discipline, serving as a "buffer" between teachers and administrators. Students who misbehaved were given the opportunity to sit in a designated area away from the class to allow time for the student to refocus. Discipline referrals were not completed for students in the refocus station. Students were allowed to re-join the class when they were ready to participate.

The Team did not find any specific structures in place to address the perceived lack of communication by the administration. The Self Assessment stated, "Constant communication is critical to the success of the school's operation." However, teachers, support staff and parents expressed the need for greater communication in a timely fashion. The Team also observed examples of the lack of communication by administration. One parent selected to be interviewed by the Team stated during the first two minutes of the interview, "I really do not have much time to talk. I came to pick up my child for a doctor's appointment and was asked to meet with you." Staff described several similar situations, some resulting in the need to change personal schedules to accommodate a "spur-of-the-moment" need at work.

The Team determined that changing the school's culture is critical to the success of the students and the school. Implementing a comprehensive schoolwide discipline plan will potentially increase time on task for students, resulting in higher achievement. Timely communication between administration and all stakeholder groups is paramount to the successful operation of the school.

The Team concluded that the school was successful in the past and has the potential for future success. The commitment of the instructional and support staff to the students and school can become the impetus to move the school forward in its improvement efforts.

The Diagnostic Review Team conducted numerous discussions regarding the findings at Chestnut Oaks Middle School, focusing on the areas that would most benefit the school in helping students to become more successful. The following Improvement Priorities were identified by the Team to assist the school in enhancing student achievement and success.

1. Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate (with fidelity) systematic structures that outline procedures and protocols to establish a positive school culture that promotes consistency in professional practices (i.e., communication, daily routines, collaboration, supervision and student discipline); includes clearly defined behavioral guidelines; focuses on high academic expectations; and supports the school's jointly developed purpose and belief statements. (Primary Indicator 1.2, Secondary Indicator 2.4)

2. Develop, implement and evaluate a data-driven, comprehensive professional development plan that incorporates training for administrative, instructional and support staff in the evaluation, interpretation and use of data to inform instruction, as well as other areas identified by staff to support schoolwide improvement initiatives aligned with the school's purpose and direction. (Primary Indicator 3.11, Secondary Indicator 5.3)

3. Develop, implement, document and evaluate a formal, comprehensive process to supervise, evaluate, monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success. (Primary Indicator 2.6, Secondary Indicator 3.4)

Team Roster

Lead Evaluator	Brief Biography
Dr. Rozalyne P. Wright Florida	Dr. Rozalyne P. Wright, Education and Diversity Consultant, earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Spanish from Bethune-Cookman College (University) in Daytona Beach, Florida; her master's degree in administration from the University of Tampa; and a doctorate in educational leadership from Nova Southeastern University. She began her educational career in 1972 as a classroom teacher at R. B. Cox Elementary School in Dade City, Florida. Her 17 years of experience at Cox Elementary School included serving as a classroom teacher, a migrant language arts resource teacher, an assistant principal, and a principal. In 1989, she relocated to Highlands County, serving as coordinator of personnel and director of elementary and federal programs. In March 2001, she was employed by the Collier County School Board as director of diversity prior to assuming responsibilities as executive assistant to the superintendent. She retired from the Collier County School District in 2008 and, subsequently, established ZORAD Consultative Services, LLC. She provides contracted services for AdvancED and supervises interns for several universities.
Team Members	
Brad Coleman South Carolina	Brad Coleman is in his 4th year serving as Principal of Pine Ridge Middle School in Lexington School District 2. His teaching, coaching and administrative experiences include working in Aiken, Swansea, and Lexington School Districts. He is currently the 2015-16 South Carolina Association of Student Councils Administrator of the Year. He serves on the board as secretary for SCAMLE. This year he was nominated by his Superintendent SCASA's Middle Level Principal of the Year. Previously, Mr. Coleman served on Governor Nikki Haley's Principal Advisory Committee. Mr. Coleman was formerly the Athletic Director and Head Football Coach at the high-school level where he received Coach of Year honors, Athletic Director of the Year and Region Athletic Director of the Year honors. Prior to entering administration, Mr. Coleman was a physical education teacher serving students K-12. He completed his Bachelor of Science at the University of South Carolina in 1994 and received his Masters of Education in Educational Administration from Cambridge College in 2010. Mr. Coleman is a current member of the State Department School Leaders Executive Institute.
Dr. Cherry Daniel South Carolina	Dr. Cherry Daniel holds a B.S. in health and physical education from the College of Charleston, an M.Ed., and Ed.S. in secondary administration from The Citadel and an Ed.D. from South Carolina State University. Prior to serving as Chief Executive Officer at the South Carolina Virtual Charter school, she served as a teacher, central office director, assistant superintendent and in 2002-2007 was appointed to serve as the state director of adult literacy and community education at the South Carolina Department of Education. She is entering her eighth year at SC Virtual. Dr. Daniel currently serves on the Board of Trustees at the College of Charleston, the Lowcountry Graduate Center and the Carolina School for Inquiry.
Dr. Jason McCreary South Carolina	Dr. Jason McCreary serves as Director of Research, Evaluation, Accountability, and Testing in Greenville County Schools, South Carolina. Before joining Greenville County Schools, he worked as an educator in New Albany Schools

	(Mississippi), a consultant for Salt Lake School District (Utah), and a Special Projects Evaluator in Memphis City Schools (Tennessee). Dr. McCreary serves as a board member for several local and state boards. He received his B.S. and M.S. from Mississippi State University and his Ph.D. from The University of Utah.
Pamela R. Sims South Carolina	Pamela R. Sims currently serves as the Lead Transformation Coach for the South Carolina State Department of Education. She has teaching experience in grades K-8 in rural and urban settings. Pamela's administrative experience includes being a Master Teacher for the South Carolina Teacher Advancement Program (SCTAP) specializing in analyzing school data as a basis for developing a school plan, an Assistant Principal and a Principal. She has extensive experience in providing instructional interventions with proven results, observing and evaluating teachers, and providing individualized professional learning experiences for teachers and administrators. Pamela holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education and a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education and Educational Leadership.

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 "Ready" on ACT Aspire (Grades 3-8) at the School and in the State (2014-2015)

Content Area by Grade Level	% Ready Grade 6	% Ready Grade 7	% Ready Grade 8	Total School	% Ready State
English	48.5	43.9	54.5	48.8	67.9
Reading	15.5	13.8	25.0	18.1	37.2
Math	25.3	10.5	9.0	14.6	46.7
Writing	21.6	21.3	18.0	20.3	24.4
ACT Readiness	N/A	N/A	N/A	76.0	N/A

Plus

- Schoolwide, students are close to the state average for writing, with 20 percent of students "Ready" versus 24 percent statewide.
- The highest performance was in sixth grade English, with 49 percent "Ready" and eighth grade English, with 55 percent "Ready."

Delta

- The school scored lower than the state average across all subject areas.
- Math readiness is well below the state average, with 9 percent "Ready" in eighth grade and 11 percent "Ready" in seventh grade.
- Reading Readiness is well below the state average, with 14 percent "Ready" in seventh grade and 16 percent "Ready" in sixth grade.

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

	Grade 6			Grade 7			Grade 8		
	2015	2014	2013	2015	2014	2013	2015	2014	2013
Writing	N/A	49.0	64.8	N/A	55.7	57.8	N/A	58.9	60.7
ELA	N/A	32.9	66.7	N/A	35.9	56.3	N/A	40.8	55.1
Math	N/A	23.7	51.1	N/A	31.3	63.9	N/A	60.5	60.3
Science	46.6	44.7	66.7	32.5	55.0	81.3	33.0	38.4	57.3
Social Studies	61.2	52.5	72.5	46.3	31.3	64.6	56.3	46.8	62.5

Plus

- Social studies scores increased in all grade levels for 2014-2015.
- Writing scores were consistently high in all grade levels in 2013-2014.
- Science scores increased slightly for 2014-2015.

Delta

- Science scores have decreased over the course of the three years.
- Math scores for sixth grade significantly decreased in 2013-2014.

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

Content Area	% School (2014-2015)	% State (2014-2015)	% School (2013-2014)	% State (2013-2014)	% School (2012-2013)	% State (2012-2013)
Algebra I	91.7	85.7	93.8	NA	100	NA
English I	100	75.1	95.2	NA	100	NA
Biology	N/A	77.8	N/A	NA	N/A	NA
U.S. History	N/A	69.1	N/A	NA	N/A	NA
All	96.2	77.3	94.6	NA	100	NA

Plus

- 100 percent of students taking the English I EOC test in 2014-2015 scored 70 percent or better, which was an increase from the previous year.
- Students taking the English I and Algebra I EOC exams scored better than the state average.

Delta

- The Algebra I EOC percentage of students scoring 70 or above has decreased over the past three years.

Stakeholder Survey 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).

Teaching and Learning Impact

(Standards 3 and 5)

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

1. Ninety-three percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my child's teachers give work that challenges my child."
2. Ninety-one percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My child is given multiple assessments to measure his/her understanding of what was taught."
3. Ninety-one percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my child's teachers work as a team to help my child learn."
4. Ninety percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in the school."
5. Eighty-seven percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school uses multiple assessment measures to determine student learning and school performance."
6. Seventy-five percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders expect staff members to hold all students to high academic standards."
7. Seventy-seven percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Teachers at my school focus instruction on understanding, not just memorizing facts."

Δ Delta:

1. Thirty-nine percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My classes are challenging (not too easy; they make me think)."
2. Nineteen percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My classes are interesting and fun."
3. Forty-three percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of students."
4. Sixty-seven percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school use a variety of technologies as instructional tools."
5. Fifty percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs."
6. Thirty-five percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, a professional learning program is designed to build capacity among all professional and support staff members."
7. Forty-six percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "The school administration communicates clear instructional goals for the school."

Leadership Capacity

(Standards 1 and 2)

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

1. Seventy-five percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders expect staff members to hold all students to high academic standards."
2. Eighty percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In my school, the principal and teachers have high expectations of me."
3. Seventy-six percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "In our school, all stakeholders are informed of policies, processes, and procedures related to grading and reporting."
4. Ninety percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My child has administrators and teachers that monitor and inform me of his/her learning progress."
5. Eighty-three percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "The principal at my child's school is available and welcoming."

Δ Delta:

1. Twenty-nine percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "The level of teacher and staff morale is high at my school."
2. Forty-six percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "The school administration provides effective instructional leadership."
3. Forty-four percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Students at my school know the rules and what happens when students break the rules."
4. Thirty-eight percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school's leaders hold themselves accountable for student learning."
5. Fifty-seven percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Teacher evaluation at my school focuses on instructional improvement."
6. Fifty-seven percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "The school administration arranges for collaborative planning and decision making."

Resource Utilization

(Standard 4)

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

1. Eighty-four percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school provides qualified staff members to support student learning."
2. Eighty-one percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school maintains facilities that support student learning."
3. Ninety-eight percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school supplies an adequate supply of learning resources that are current and in good condition."

Δ Delta:

1. Sixty-five percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Computers are up-to-date and used by teachers to help me learn."

2. Fifty-nine percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school provides opportunities for students to participate in activities that interest them.”
3. Sixty-five percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “Our school provides instructional time and resources to support our school’s goals and priorities.”

Diagnostic Review Schedule

Sunday – April 17, 2016

Time	Event	Where	Who
3:00 p.m.	Hotel Check-in	Hotel	
3:30 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. 5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.	Orientation/Team Work Session #1 Dinner	Hotel Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	**Principal's Overview**	Hotel Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team
7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #1 (cont.)	Hotel Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team

Monday – April 18, 2016

Time	Event	Where	Who
6:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Hotel	Diagnostic Review Team
6:30 a.m.	Team Departs for School		
7:30 a.m.	Team Arrives at School (Team Settles In)	School Office	Diagnostic Review Team
8:15 – 9:05 a.m.	**INTERVIEW: PRINCIPAL**	Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team Principal
9:08 – 10:00 a.m.	Classroom Observations; Stakeholder Interviews; Individual interviews **INTERVIEW: 8TH GRADE STUDENTS – 9:15 – 9:45 a.m.**	Conf. Room Classrooms **War Room**	Diagnostic Review Team Students
10:03 – 10:55 a.m.	Classroom Observations; Stakeholder Interviews; Individual Interviews; Artifact Review	Conf. Room Classrooms	Diagnostic Review Team
10:58 – 11:50 a.m.	Classroom Observations; Stakeholder Interviews; Individual Interviews; Artifact Review	Conf. Room Classrooms	Diagnostic Review Team
11:50 a.m. – 12:20 a.m.	**WORKING LUNCH**	Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team
12:20 – 1:12 p.m.	Classroom observations; Stakeholder Interviews; Individual interviews **INTERVIEW 7TH GRADE STUDENTS: 12:25 – 12:55 p.m.**	**War Room**	Diagnostic Review Team Students
1:15 – 2:07 p.m.	Classroom Observations; Stakeholder Interviews; Individual Interviews; **INTERVIEW 6TH GRADE STUDENTS: 1:30 – 2:00 p.m.**	**War Room**	Diagnostic Review Team Students
2:10 – 3:00 p.m.	Classroom Observations; Stakeholder Interviews; Individual Interviews **INTERVIEW SUPPORT STAFF (Instructional): 2:30 – 3:00 p.m.** **INTERVIEW SUPPORT STAFF (Non-Instructional): 2:30 – 3:00 p.m.**	**War Room** **Guidance Conf. Room**	Diagnostic Review Team Support Staff
3:15 p.m.	Team Returns to Hotel		Diagnostic Review Team
5:30 – 8:30 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #2 Working Dinner (Hotel Conference Room)	Hotel Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team

Tuesday – April 19, 2016

Time	Event	Where	Who
	Breakfast	Hotel	Diagnostic Review Team
6:30 a.m.	Team Departs for School		Diagnostic Review Team
7:30 a.m.	Team Arrives at School		Diagnostic Review Team
8:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Continue interviews, artifact review, and classroom observations **INTERVIEW PARENTS: 8:30 – 9:00 a.m.**	Conf. Room **War Room**	Diagnostic Review Team Parents
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	**WORKING LUNCH**	Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team
12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Continue interviews, artifact review, and classroom observations	Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team
3:15 p.m.	Team Returns to Hotel	Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team
5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #3 Working Dinner (Hotel Conference Room)	Hotel Conf. Rm.	Diagnostic Review Team

Wednesday – April 20, 2016

Time	Event	Where	Who
7:30 a.m.	Breakfast/Check Out of Hotel and Depart for School	Hotel	Diagnostic Review Team
8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Final Team Work Session	Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Working Lunch	Conf. Room	Diagnostic Review Team
12:00 p.m.	Diagnostic Review Team Exits the School		Lead Evaluator
Written Report	The Team's written report will be provided to the school or DOE within 30 days following the on-site Diagnostic Review.		