

Collier County Public School District Receives Accreditation February 23, 2017

The Collier County Public School District has been accredited by AdvancED, the parent company of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), the world's largest national education community. Accreditation is both a significant achievement pronouncing an institution's quality of education, as well as a remarkably enriching process for the institutions recognizing the tremendous competitive and performance gains it affords. The AdvancED accreditation process is also known in terms of its ability to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education.

The External Review is an integral component of AdvancED Performance Accreditation and provides the institution with a comprehensive evaluation guided by the results of diagnostic instruments, in-depth review of data and documentation, and the professional judgment of a team of qualified and highly trained evaluators. A series of diagnostic instruments examines the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of leadership to effect continuous improvement, and the degree to which the institution optimizes its use of available resources to facilitate and support student success. The results of this evaluation are represented in the Index of Education Quality (IEQ) and through critical observations, namely, Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

During the External Review, the accreditation team of 10, five from Florida and five from outside Florida, visited 14 schools and interviewed the Superintendent, five School Board members, 49 central office staff members, 66 school administrators, 25 instructional staff members, 36 support staff, 94 parents, community, and business partners, and 106 students. A total of 382 stakeholders were interviewed.

Index of Education Quality

The Index of Education Quality (IEQ) provides a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of indicators and evaluative criteria comprised from the three domains: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; and 3) the use of resources and data to support and optimize learning. The overall and domain scores can range from 100-400. The domain scores are derived from: the AdvancED Standards and indicators ratings; results of the Analysis of Student Performance; and data from Stakeholder Feedback Surveys (students, parents, and staff).

	CCPS IEQ Score	AdvancED IEQ Average
Overall Score	329.51	278.94
Teaching and Learning Impact (Standards 3 and 5)	326.19	268.48
Leadership Capacity (Standards 1 and 2)	315.83	293.71
Resource Utilization (Standard 4)	358.75	286.27

*Individual standard indicator ratings

The following were identified as Powerful Practices:

- The Collier County Public Schools superintendent and leadership teams foster a highly effective culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.
- System and school staff employ a wide-range of electronic, print, and in-person communication strategies to effectively engage stakeholders in support of the system's purpose and direction.
- Collier County Public Schools demonstrates outstanding resource management and makes wise and effective use of public and private funds to address the learning and developmental needs of children.

The following were our Opportunities for Improvement:

- Develop and implement a continuous program of professional development for teachers that is aligned with the district's practice of data dialogues.
- Enhance the system's programs that enable parents to provide academic support for their children.

The following was our Improvement Priority:

- Develop a structure for quality implementation of school board professional development based on the system's core values, strategic plan and current CCPS board policy.

Summary

The most notable theme in CCPS is evidenced by the intentional and effective leadership throughout the system and in the schools. The superintendent was described as tirelessly being "everywhere at all times," meeting with school, community and business stakeholders to ensure that opportunities to share the good news of the school system and solicit input were not missed. Likewise, the visibility and accessibility of other school leaders was mentioned by numerous parents and community members during interviews. During an interview, the superintendent stated that she always likes to "find a way to say yes" when it comes to providing necessary support and encouragement for staff members at any level. This "can do and will do" attitude was also noted to have been adopted by many of the schools visited.

Two "beliefs" statements of CCPS (as printed on page 3 in the current Strategic Plan booklet) read "Each person in the school system must be focused on student success" and "We must base all our decisions on evidence and the best interest of students." The Team noted numerous examples of the intent of those belief statements being transformed into reality in the schools. A strong focus on student achievement was evident at the system level as well as in the schools visited.

Another prevalent theme throughout the community is the level of pride and community support for the schools and school system. Parents indicated their faith in the schools to provide a safe and secure learning environment, both in survey responses as well as statements during interviews. A number of parent and community volunteers were observed during the visits to the schools. The schools appeared to be welcoming to their stakeholders and yet

maintained the appropriate level of seriousness about the important work of teaching and learning. Staff members interviewed were open in their remarks and expressed pride in their work. Teachers appeared to be highly professional and focused on the needs of their students. The atmosphere in the schools was of a professional and collaborative nature. This collaborative working relationship appears to have brought out the best in faculty members and a sense of ownership in and greater support for the decisions made.

A strong commitment to continuous improvement was noted both at the system level and in the schools. Support for the professional growth of all teachers as well as all other staff members was noted. Continuous improvement of student achievement was and is a major focus of the system. Through structured "data dialogues," each school analyzes and shares achievement data of its students and collaboratively determines ways to improve the learning of students

Outstanding resource management and long-range planning to ensure the needed resources for the system will be available in the future is another strong practice noted by the Team. The school system makes wise use of public and non-public funds. Conservative and focused spending has enabled the school system to provide for current needs and plan for and allocate funding for future needs while paying down the system's level of capital debt.

Lastly, but equally important, significant efforts have been made to keep stakeholders informed of news and activities and to do so in multiple ways. Parents expressed satisfaction with the amount and nature of information coming from the system and the schools. The system has taken significant steps to ensure effective communication from all levels and to encourage the use of multiple modes of communication. The system's website offers a wealth of information and links to important resources for parents. The design of school websites has been coordinated to assist parents who have children in different levels of school. Printed newsletters and brochures are available in every school and in the system office. In the words of one parent, "Information is available--if a parent says he couldn't find it, he didn't look or ask."

Collier County Public Schools offers a wide variety of effective instructional programs and support services to meet the needs of all students. Additionally, the system's Vision and Mission statements serve as guiding principles to ensure proper focus on student outcomes. At the same time, several significant challenges face the system that should be addressed to realize continuous improvement in the educational success of all students.

Collier County is a highly diverse community. According to documents reviewed, that diversity has increased significantly over the last 10-year (2001-2016) period and is likely to continue to change. The schools must be alert and be prepared for that new reality, whatever the changes bring. Changes in the typical demographic areas of race and ethnicity, the language spoken primarily in the home, level of poverty and family structure will all require greater awareness and empathy on the part of members of the system staff. That necessary awareness and empathy calls for continual training and individual growth. Only with staff understanding of and

the ability to relate to students will CCPS continue to have the classroom success that it has today.

CCPS has invested significantly in the power of instructional technology. A modern, fully-functional technology infrastructure is in place to support classrooms. To ensure that this investment pays the desired dividends, it is essential for the school system to maintain the necessary support for timely repairs and replacement of equipment, ongoing updates of instructional software, continual training for teachers to use the tools to their fullest capability and foster a system-wide expectation for the use of those tools. Teachers who are trained and use instructional technology effectively in their daily instruction are empowered to bring a new world of possibilities, problem solving and exploration to students and unleash an abundance of creative and illustrative support. The use of technology must become transparent or so customary that it is not seen as a special "presentation." More importantly, students need to use technology as an everyday learning tool rather than as a "center activity" or only for research assignments. In the hands of a student, that same technology can open doors to a world of new ideas, creativity, explanation, support, and learning.

CCPS is by any measure already a highly effective learning organization. Students are successful, leadership is intentional and focused, teachers are effective and stakeholders believe in and support the schools. The recommendations of the External Review Team are intended to encourage professional dialogue and to support continued improvement by building on current strengths and identifying areas of needed improvement.

Perhaps the most important recommendation is to address the clear need for training and improved conditions of communication and the level of trust among board members and between certain board members and the superintendent. The impact of a unified governing board focused on the growing needs of a school system cannot be overemphasized. Highly effective organizations in all fields are characterized by clear direction and collaborative support from their governing board and senior leadership. School systems which are highly successful in serving the education needs of their students and aspirations of the community depend on that same level of leadership. Only when the members of the school board and the superintendent are collaborating with a high level of trust and mutual support will the focus of the school system's leaders be 100% on the stated mission of the system, namely "...providing exceptional educational opportunities that motivate and engage each student."

Another recommendation for improvement comes directly from parent requests. All parents want their child to be successful in school. Most parents desire to help their child with homework and other assignments. However, as standards have changed and teaching techniques have adapted to those changes, some have lost the ability to understand much of the work and provide supportive explanations at home. New approaches to helping parents in this regard would provide many students with additional assistance from home.

Standard Indicator Scores

The AdvancED External Review Team examines adherence to AdvancED Standards as well as how the institution functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics expected of an accredited institution. 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 External Review Team members' individual ratings.

Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

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

Indicator	Description	CCPS Score	AdvancED Average
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	3.10	2.68
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	3.00	2.68
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	3.40	2.90
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.90	2.65

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	CCPS Score	AdvancED Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	3.00	2.97
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	2.10	2.96
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	2.20	3.17
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	3.00	3.03
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	3.90	2.74
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	3.30	2.70

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	CCPS Score	AdvancED Average
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	3.00	2.69
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	3.20	2.49
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	3.00	2.59
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.10	2.71
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	3.20	2.58
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	3.00	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	3.30	2.60
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.70	2.97
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	2.90	2.50
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.	3.00	2.47
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	3.10	2.65
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.70	2.64

Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

Indicator	Description	CCPS Score	AdvancED Average
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	3.90	2.87
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	3.00	2.87
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	4.00	3.06
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	3.90	2.76
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	3.80	2.73
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	3.80	2.72
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	3.20	2.58
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	3.10	2.60

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Indicator	Description	CCPS Score	AdvancED Average
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.30	2.66
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	3.20	2.49
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	2.50	2.15
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	3.10	2.50
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	3.20	2.75