



Accreditation Progress Report

Broward County School District
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1.0 About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

Background. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education worldwide, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 27,000 schools in 65 countries. AdvancED provides accreditation under the seals of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI).

The Accreditation Process.

To earn and maintain accreditation, district/systems must:

1. Meet the AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems.

District/Systems demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school systems to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

2. Engage in continuous improvement.

District/Systems implement continuous improvement focused on improving student performance and school effectiveness.

3. Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.

District/Systems engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, district/systems host an external Quality Assurance Review team once every five years. The team evaluates the district/system's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the district/system's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the district/system improve. The district/system acts on the team's required actions and submits an Accreditation Progress Report at prescribed intervals following the Quality Assurance Review.

The AdvancED accreditation process engages the entire school community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help district/systems be the best they can be on behalf of the students they serve.

2.0 Introduction to the Accreditation Progress Report

Purpose

The Accreditation Progress Report (APR) is a critical component of the AdvancED accreditation process. It engages the district/system in a detailed review and analysis of the steps it has taken to address the required actions made by the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team. Completing the report helps the district/system focus and reflect on its continuous improvement efforts.

It is the responsibility of the district/system to address each of the QAR report's required actions within the 5-year term accreditation. Deadlines for completion of the report are based on the district/system's accreditation status and must be met to maintain accreditation. Some district/systems may complete multiple reports during the 5-year term to demonstrate that they have fully addressed the required actions.

Structure of the Report

The APR is organized around the required actions in the district/system's QAR team report. The APR lists the required action from the report along with the rationale and evidence supporting the required action. The district/system then indicates the progress that it has made toward meeting the required action and provides a more detailed response describing the actions it has taken and the results obtained. The district/system provides a response for each of the QAR team required actions.

Following the district/system's response is the reviewer's response. Each APR is read by an AdvancED reader in the state or regional office who reviews the district/system's response to determine if the required action has been met. The reader provides his/her assessment of the progress the school has made and then offers comments to the district/system. If required actions remain in progress or not addressed, a new APR will be created with a new deadline for completion. As noted earlier, the district/system must address the required actions within the 5-year accreditation term.

Conclusion

The Accreditation Progress Report is a useful report for members of the district/system and broader community. It helps community members see and monitor the ongoing improvement efforts of their district/system. It demonstrates how the district/system uses its accreditation for the ongoing benefit of the students it serves.

3.0. Summary

1.1. Based on the actions taken by your institution to address the required actions provided by the QAR team, what has been the impact on your institution's overall effectiveness?:

Broward County Public Schools has introduced Accreditation standards and indicators to all departments and school leadership teams much earlier in the accreditation cycle. All department divisions have representation on the District's active Steering Committee. Meetings are scheduled, during the school year, in eight week increments. District departments and divisions have already begun the process of documenting and alignment of evidence of work within the new accreditation standards. In addition, District divisions have begun an annual self-assessments as part of District Performance Management Sessions.

Schools with a letter grade of A, B and C use the District's customized School Improvement Plan and the results and analysis of the self-assessment are a required component of the plan. Schools with state assigned letter grades of D and F are required to use a state School Improvement Plan template, but the District likewise requires the self-assessment to be completed annually in ASSIST.

Broward County Public Schools has taken a stronger position for the embedding of accreditation standards into the culture of the school district as a more formal part of the continuous improvement process. With the re-assignment of accreditation to the School Performance & Accountability Division/Office of Strategic Achievement, the facilitation of accreditation occurs within the same division as schools. Supervising Directors of the District's schools along with the Director and Coordinator of the Office of Strategic Achievement and the Chief School Performance & Accountability Officer have attended AdvancEd training. These administrative staff members also volunteered to serve on accreditation visits in order, in part, to continue to learn from other Districts about their alignment and processes to accreditation.

The communication between the District and the community continues to improve. The Superintendent holds an annual Ed Talk event to engage the parent, business and other stakeholders community. The inaugural event led to the production of the District's 3-year Strategic Plan. The District now surveys the stakeholder membership of each school's School Advisory Council in order to encourage the involvement of the membership in alignment with the development, implementation and monitoring of each school's School Improvement Plan.

1.2. What would you consider to be challenges that still lie ahead and how do you plan to address those challenges?:

The sheer size of the school District is a challenge. Broward County Public Schools is the 6th largest school district in the United States, and the largest fully accredited school district in the country. Traditionally, it takes 2-3 years for an initiative to become embedded in a District of this size. Thus, our District started early in creating a new steering committee structure to align to the new accreditation standards.

An additional challenge is that the District department and staff involved in implementing accreditation are new to the task. More staff have attended accreditation training than in prior years to include volunteering to serve on external review teams for other districts.

The alignment of changing curriculum standards within the state of Florida is a challenge. Florida has recently

announced re-opening the selection process for a new Common Core State Standards Assessment. Aligning with accreditation standards will supercede the quality and rigor required by a state assessment.

1.3. How will you use the insights gained from your accreditation activities to inform and enhance your quality assurance and school improvement efforts?:

Having the department facilitating accreditation and schools within the same division fosters collaboration in a streamlined manner. One example is that accreditation implementation can be addressed on an on-going basis at weekly staff meetings.

The continuation of an Accreditation Steering Committee, with regularly scheduled meetings, allows for collaboration across divisions at the District level. Continued discussions and best practices opportunities allow for divisions to share with each other how they are addressing the required actions and the embedding of accreditation standards into their work.

The inclusion of AdvancEd Self-Assessment results into the School Improvement Plan (SIP) permits all stakeholders to be a part of the implementation at the school level. By state statute the SIP is developed, approved and monitored by a School Advisory Council (SAC). The SAC is required to be 51% non-District employees and has required school-based, parent and community positions. The movement of accreditation into the SIP and the SAC calls for there to be dialogue on a regular basis in alignment with accreditation by all schools.

Broward County School District hosted a Quality Assurance Review team on 10/23/2011 - 10/26/2011. Through interviews with district/system stakeholders, classroom observations, and a review of district/system documents and student performance results, the team developed a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) report detailing its findings from the visit. The full report can be viewed at www.advanc-ed.org.

The QAR report contained commendations and required actions for the district/system. The district/system is responsible for addressing each of the required actions in the report. At prescribed intervals based on the district/system's accreditation status, the district/system must complete an Accreditation Progress Report. Below, please find the required actions from the QAR report and the district/system's response to each required action. Following the district/system's response is the reviewer's progress response and comments.

4.0. Required Action 1

Source: QAR

Date: 2011-11-22

Required Action:

Design and implement a system wide policy and corresponding process to ensure the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools are assessed at every school and utilized to verify all schools meet the AdvancED accreditation standards.

- *Devise a comprehensive communication initiative to make certain all schools are aware of the AdvancED Quality Standards for Schools and their importance in the accreditation process.*
- *Establish procedures to guide school level stakeholders in the collective reflection and self-assessment of the standards and indicators.*
- *Determine a format and process by which schools provide evidence to demonstrate the degree to which they meet each standard.*
- *Review school assessments to confirm standards are met and identify patterns of strength and need.*
- *Aggregate results and employ this data to provide meaningful assistance to schools and to inform district strategic priorities.*

Evidence:

School and central office staff reported that the AdvancED Quality Standards for Schools were not reviewed, evaluated, or documented at the individual school level. Staff at schools expressed no awareness of the Standards or the importance of assessing them. There were no artifacts or other forms of evidence to indicate the Quality Standards for Schools were incorporated in the District Accreditation initiative. Each school did participate in the assessment of the District standards and their responses contributed to the District Standards Assessment Report (SAR) submitted to AdvancED and provided to the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Team.

Rationale:

A requirement of the District Accreditation protocol is that all schools must demonstrate and maintain their accreditation status as evidenced by their meeting the AdvancED Quality Standards for Schools. It is the district's obligation and responsibility to implement practices to ensure this requirement is satisfied. Furthermore, as stakeholders participate in the reflection and dialogue surrounding the assessment of standards and indicators they

will become engaged in a valuable and relevant professional growth experience. The insight gained from data at both the individual school and district aggregate will provide the district with evidence to determine the type of assistance and support schools need as well as inform the meaningful and equitable allocation of resources.

4.1. District/System Response

Progress Status: In Progress

Response: **DEVISE A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE TO MAKE CERTAIN ALL SCHOOLS ARE AWARE OF THE ADVANCED QUALITY STANDARDS FOR SCHOOLS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

TRAINING

1. District Divisions submitted training plans for their staff in the 5 Standards.
2. Assistant Principals and Intern Principals on accreditation standards.
3. Aspiring administrators via required leadership development program.
4. Principals training, via sub-cadre groupings, on accreditation standard.
5. School based personnel on accreditation standards and alignment to district School Improvement Plan.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

6. Performance Management review of each District division to include self-assessment aligned to new accreditation standards.

WEBSITE

7. District created accreditation website with additional resources to educate schools and stakeholders in standards.

ESTABLISH PROCEDURES TO GUIDE SCHOOL LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COLLECTIVE REFLECTION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

1. Division training sessions to introduce and utilize ASSIST. Divisions will complete self-assessment annually.
2. School trainings on ASSIST to include the self-assessment as a required component of the School Improvement Plan.
3. Schools to regularly include AdvancED Accreditation Standards in their agenda at faculty meetings, P.T.A. meetings and School Advisory Council meetings.

DETERMINE A FORMAT AND PROCESS BY WHICH SCHOOLS PROVIDE

EVIDENCE TO DEMONSTRATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY MEET EACH STANDARD

1. Schools to include the results of the self-assessment in ASSIST as a required component of the School Improvement Plan.
2. ASSIST Self-Assessment to re-occur annually as part of the state statute required School Improvement Plan approval.
3. Digital warehouse being created for schools to house evidence electronically in alignment with standards.

REVIEW SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS TO CONFIRM STANDARDS ARE MET AND IDENTIFY PATTERNS OF STRENGTH AND NEED

1. Processes are implemented where school assessments are reviewed for alignment with standards to include (a) building assessments in collaboration with school-based coaches, and (b) facilitating the use of district approved item banks. Students participate in Benchmark Assessment Tests (BATs) two times per year to progress monitor student achievement in alignment with standards-based classroom instruction and assessment. Aggregate and disaggregate data are provided to schools for analysis of strengths and need, to be followed by appropriate instructional enrichment and remediation.
2. All schools have participated in Common Core State Standards support sessions offered by the District. The core components of these sessions are for the schools to align curriculum resources, methodologies and assessments to the new standards.
3. One of the end-products of a Common Core State Standards support session is an action plan that documents both the strengths and needs of individual schools.
4. Schools have curriculum coaches in addition to curriculum Assistant Principals that supervise and monitor assessments to assure alignment to standards. The District facilitates regular sessions for coaches to offer guidance for school-based practices.

AGGREGATE RESULTS AND EMPLOY THIS DATA TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOLS AND TO INFORM DISTRICT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. District Strategic Plan data has become the academic targets for A, B and C grade schools to meet. Each school has individualized targets that collectively permit the District to meet the strategic plan academic goals. School specific data is included in School Improvement Plan for comparison/analysis versus the established targets.
2. Comparison of school data versus district average targets is leading to discussion on status of targets.
3. School goals, via the School Improvement Plan, are in alignment to Strategic Plan Objectives data.
4. District progress monitoring data (Benchmark Assessment Tests 1 & 2) are provided

at a District-wide (as well as individual school level).

5. State standardized testing data (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) are provided at a District-wide level.

6. Florida Department of Education provides each individual school district with a letter grade and accompanying proficiency and learning gains data.

4.2. Reviewer Response

Progress Response: Completed

Comments for Institution: The System has implemented its required action to design and implement a system wide policy and corresponding process to ensure the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools are assessed at every school and utilized to verify all schools meet the AdvancED accreditation standards. Extensive activity across the school system has been implemented in order to meet this required action.

The district has sufficiently addressed the recommendation of the Quality Assurance Review team. As detailed in the System's response, the System has implemented a range of strategies that attend to the areas noted in the QAR team's recommendation. The System is encouraged to embed and sustain these strategies to ensure continued results.

5.0. Required Action 2

Source: QAR

Date: 2011-11-22

Required Action:

Proactively take aggressive action to showcase and promote Broward's positive impact on its students. Strategically plan to purposefully bridge the discernible gap between public perception and reality relative to Broward's performance and impact on the students it serves.

Evidence:

Information collected throughout the visit gave evidence of a concerning discrepancy between performance and perception. Patterns emerged as data were collected and reviewed that verified commendable gains in student performance, quality and dedication of staff, richness of available learning opportunities, and diversity of instructional practices to provide for differentiated student needs. A significant number of stakeholders representing various groups expressed concern that the public is not aware of the scope and constancy of these successes and positive attributes as much as it is aware of the problems and issues that inhibit the delivery of a quality education. There is also some confusion over the source of mandates and changes impacting district decisions and actions that is contributing to the negative perceptions. While many of these were initiated at the federal and state levels, some stakeholders attributed them to poor decision-making on Broward's part. Respondents noted that alternative forms of funding were necessary and that business partners were a viable source of support. They reported that to motivate businesses to get involved, connections with individual schools

is a highly effective strategy.

Rationale:

A district developed systemic and systematic marketing and public relations plan will put Broward in a position to get in front of negative and/or inaccurate communication. It is important to inform both internal and external stakeholders of all successes and recognitions. If communicated and celebrated on a cohesive and consistent basis, positive results will become front and center on the communities' radar. Individual schools are where the real impact of student learning, instructional quality, and effectiveness of district operations become evident. It would be prudent for the district to create messages and provide guidance to schools and departments so they can contribute to the district's over-all marketing effort. This would also enable them to deliver targeted and specialized messages for the purpose of gaining direct support from parents and businesses within their local community.

5.1. District/System Response

Progress Status: In Progress

Response: **PROACTIVELY TAKE AGGRESSIVE ACTION TO SHOWCASE AND PROMOTE BROWARD'S POSITIVE IMPACT ON ITS STUDENTS. STRATEGICALLY PLAN TO PURPOSEFULLY BRIDGE THE DISCERNIBLE GAP BETWEEN PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND REALITY RELATIVE TO BROWARD'S PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT ON THE STUDENTS IT SERVES.**

1. Superintendent Listening Tours and Conversations with the District are opportunities for parents, students and community members to provide insight to District leadership about issues facing the District and the educational priorities of the community.

2. Ed Talk public forum for Superintendent, School Board Members and District leaders to obtain input from all stakeholders on the development and implementation of the District's Strategic Plan, as well as discuss and prioritize educational strategies and next steps.

3. A Communications Strategy has been proposed to the School Board and includes:

External Communications - Executing strategic and effective communications practices to make the District visible to the community.

Crisis Communications - Mitigation of negative impacts in the community and encourages fair, objective media coverage.

Media Relations - Increases the number of positive stories in the media, showcases student achievement, and help the District communicate with target audiences about increasing student learning, providing educational options and continuous improvements within the financial and human capital arenas.

Branding and Marketing - Increase the distribution of positive information about the District.

Online Communications (including social media) - Improve the reach to audiences through the immediate connections offered by electronic communication.

Broward Education Communications Network (BECON) - Expand the reach to District stakeholders with programs in order to increase awareness of the District and highlight student achievement.

Internal Communications - Develop consistent communications to foster confidence and a sense of belonging and purpose.

Communications Training - Enable employees to understand the role of strategic communication and provide tools to effectively serve as District ambassadors.

4. A Marketing and Communication Center has been developed for internal stakeholders with access to communications tools, including templates, talking points, videos, and Frequently Asked Questions. These resources were created utilizing communications best practices and designed to align with the District's strategic goals.

5. Monthly School Advisory Council Meetings are open public events for the community to learn about what is occurring at their school.

6. The Office of Service Quality has been created and is devoted to assisting parents and community members by linking them to available resources, providing accurate information and resolving concerns in a caring, helpful and professional manner. This office works cooperatively with parent organizations and community groups to foster an understanding of available school programs and services while maintaining and enhancing communication between schools and community stakeholders.

5.2. Reviewer Response

Progress Response: Completed

Comments for Institution: The Broward County School District has completed the initiation of the required action to proactively take aggressive action to showcase and promote Broward's positive impact on its students and to strategically plan to purposefully bridge the discernible gap between public perception and reality relative to Broward's performance and impact on the students it serves. Appropriate steps have been taken; additional steps will develop in the future for the System to involve itself in.

After reviewing the System's response, AdvancED finds that this recommendation has been completed. The System has taken the necessary steps to address the recommendation made by the Quality Assurance Review team. The System is encouraged to monitor its ongoing activities to ensure that the actions taken to address this recommendation are sustained over time.

6.0. Required Action 3

Source: QAR

Date: 2011-11-22

Required Action:

Institute procedures to fully maximize the positive impact of the site-based approach to school leadership and decision-making.

Evidence:

Respondents indicated that the site-based approach as currently implemented empowers schools in positive ways. This leadership style promotes the selection and delivery of learning experiences that are suitable and aligned to their students' needs. Schools are encouraged to examine, understand, and respond to their unique context by creating learning environments that support the characteristics and styles of Broward's diverse student body. All goals and actions must complement and align with the district purpose and direction.

However, interviews and observations show instances where this flexibility contributed to the inequitable distribution or ineffective allocation of resources within and among schools. The appropriateness, implementation, and impact of site-based decisions and actions do not appear to be monitored to the degree necessary to ensure the core value of equity (giving all students what they need) is being pursued and achieved with fidelity. In addition, few formal procedures or processes to guarantee the purposeful replication of proven practices successfully implemented at individual or clusters of schools were apparent. While there are many opportunities for sharing ideas, organized approaches for identifying effective practices accompanied by systematic processes to promote implementation were not in evidence.

Rationale:

The inherent challenges of site-based leadership and decision making can be reconciled to promote a meaningful balance between empowerment and required application of proven practices. This can be accomplished without compromising the intent and strengths of the site-based philosophy.

Broward's current comprehensive professional development program would be strengthened with the inclusion of job-embedded procedures for replicating, practicing, and implementing proven practices across the district. In addition, the existing quality assurance methods would be enriched by policies and practices to ensure distribution of resources, availability of technology, and quality of instruction is equitable.

These actions will contribute to a broader base of success, improve system continuity, strengthen organizational efficiency, enhance equity, and promote sustainability.

6.1. District/System Response

Progress Status: In Progress

Response: **SITE-BASED LEADERSHIP**

1. Schools organized into cadres and sub-cadres where principals collaborate with each other for professional learning communities that include: (a) leadership development in the content areas, school improvement, quality instruction, networking, classroom walkthroughs, best practices and lessons learned; (b) professional development design and opportunities in conjunction with the leaders deliberate practice plan and

administrator evaluation self-assessment; and (c) mentoring and coaching opportunities for struggling schools from like and unlike schools.

2. School principals are employing site-based budgeting.
3. School principals have the sole discretion to select and hire personnel (after all contractual obligations are met, for example surplus and guaranteed transfers).
4. The school supervision structure has been redesigned whereby directors who oversee schools are deployed as coaches and mentors to principals.
5. School principals can select and deploy aftercare services and providers.
6. School principals can select options for support with the implementation of Common Core. Support models range from silver (minimal support) to platinum (maximum support).
7. School principals are the sole proprietors of building level schedules and staffing patterns.
8. School principals collaborate with their communities to develop individualized missions and visions aligned with the District's.
9. The district empowers schools to own "successes" by proactive and effective decision making processes.
10. Principals discuss academic results of site-based decisions at Superintendent's High Quality Instruction Roundtable sessions.
11. Strategic Plan targets provided to schools. Schools provided the flexibility to use strategies and resources to reach the targets.
12. School performs annual self-assessment in ASSIST and take action based on results.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. District training offerings are being restructured to reflect specific data driven school needs. Trainings to be school site-based learning communities as opposed to district-based independent sessions.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES

1. District process for single-basal adoption of curriculum for content areas.
2. District technology plan works towards equity of technology resources.
3. Digital 5 pilot program accepts schools from varied academic and economic backgrounds. This initiative calls for adopted curriculum materials to be available entirely online in 5th grade classrooms accessible by new student laptops.

6.2. Reviewer Response

Progress Response: Completed

Comments for Institution: The System has completed the Required Action to institute procedures to fully maximize the positive impact of the site-based approach to school leadership and decision-making. Addition opportunities will arise in the future for the System relative to this Required Action; however, this Required Action is completed.

AdvancED commends the System for the steps it has taken to address the recommendation of the Quality Assurance Review team. As outlined in the System's response, the System has demonstrated its ability to effectively mobilize its efforts to respond to external direction for the benefit of the System and its students. AdvancED concurs that this recommendation has been completed and encourages the System to continue its work in this area.