

# Report of the External Review Team for Fort Calhoun Elementary School

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# Introduction

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.

Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed more than 100 years ago by American universities and secondary schools and designed primarily to distinguish schools adhering to a set of educational standards. Today the accreditation process is used at all levels of education and is recognized for its ability to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education.

Institutions seeking to gain or retain accreditation must meet AdvancED Standards specific to their institution type, demonstrate acceptable levels of student performance and the continuous improvement of student performance, and provide evidence of stakeholder engagement and satisfaction. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the conditions, processes, and practices within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Standards help to delineate what matters. They provide a common language through which an education community can engage in conversations about educational improvement, system 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 External Review Team uses AdvancED Standards, associated indicators and criteria related to student performance and stakeholder engagement to guide its evaluation. The Team examines adherence to standards as well as how the institution functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics expected of an accredited institution. 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 External Review Team members' individual ratings.

The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation. It energizes and equips the institution's leadership and stakeholders to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that

may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. External Review is a rigorous process that includes the in-depth examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with all stakeholder groups, and extensive observations of learning, instruction, and operations.

## 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 External Review the institution conducted a Self Assessment that applied the standards and criteria for accreditation. The institution 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 External Review Team's findings and critical observations are shared in this report through the IEQ™ results as well as through the identification of Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

## Index of Education Quality

In the past, accreditation reviews resulted in an accreditation recommendation on status. Labels such as advised, warned, probation, or all clear were used to describe the status of a school relative to the AdvancED Standards and other evaluative criteria. Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, AdvancED introduced a new framework to describe the results of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduced an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™). The IEQ™ comprises three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the capacity of leadership to guide the institution toward the achievement of its

vision and strategic priorities; and 3) use of resources to support and optimize learning. Therefore, your institution will no longer receive an accreditation status. Instead, your institution will be accredited with an IEQ™ score. In the case where an institution is failing to meet established criteria, the accreditation will be under review thereby requiring frequent monitoring and demonstrated improvement.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and associated indicators, the analysis of student performance, and the engagement and feedback of stakeholders. Within each domain institutions can connect to the individual performance levels that are applied in support of the AdvancED Standards and evaluative criteria. Within the performance levels are detailed descriptors that serve as a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report and building on their Powerful Practices, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Opportunity for Improvement and Improvement Priority as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected indicator(s).

The IEQ™ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. An institution's IEQ™ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Subsequent actions for improvement and evidence that these have had a positive impact will raise the institution's IEQ™ score.

## Benchmark Data

Throughout this report, AdvancED provides benchmark data for each indicator and for each component of the evaluative criteria. These benchmark data represent the overall averages across the entire AdvancED Network for your institution type. Thus, the AdvancED Network average provides an extraordinary opportunity for institutions to understand their context on a global scale rather than simply compared to a state, region, or country.

It is important to understand that the AdvancED Network averages are provided primarily to serve as a tool for continuous improvement and not as a measure of quality in and of itself. Benchmark data, when wisely employed, have a unique capacity to help institutions identify and leverage their strengths and areas of improvement to significantly impact student learning.

## Powerful Practices

A key to continuous improvement is the institution's ability to learn from and build upon its most effective and impactful practices. Such practices serve as critical leverage points necessary to guide, support and ensure continuous improvement. A hallmark of the accreditation process is its commitment to identifying with evidence, the conditions, processes and practices that are having the most significant impact on student performance and institutional effectiveness. Throughout this report, the External Review Team has captured and defined Powerful Practices. These noteworthy practices are essential to the institution's effort to continue its journey of improvement.

## Opportunities for Improvement

Every institution can and must improve no matter what levels of performance it has achieved in its past. During the process of the review, the External Review Team identified areas of improvement where the institution is meeting the expectations for accreditation but in the professional judgment of the Team these are Opportunities for Improvement that should be considered by the institution. Using the criteria described in the corresponding rubric(s) to the Opportunity for Improvement, the institution can identify what elements of practice must be addressed to guide the improvement.

## Improvement Priorities

The expectations for accreditation are clearly defined in a series of the rubric-based AdvancED Standards, indicators and evaluative criteria focused on the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of the institution to be guided by effective leadership, and the allocation and use of resources to support student learning. As such, the External Review Team reviewed, analyzed and deliberated over significant bodies of evidence provided by the institution and gathered by the Team during the process. In the professional judgment of the Team as well as the results of the diagnostic process, the Team defined, with rationale, Improvement Priorities. The priorities must be addressed in a timely manner by the institution to retain and improve their accreditation performance as represented by the IEQ™. Improvement Priorities serve as the basis for the follow-up and monitoring process that will begin upon conclusion of the External Review. The institution must complete and submit an Accreditation Progress Report within two years of the External Review. The report must include actions taken by the institution to address the Improvement Priorities along with the corresponding evidence and results. The IEQ™ will be recalculated by AdvancED upon review of the evidence and results associated with the Improvement Priorities.

## The Review

The Fort Calhoun External Review was completed on April 15-17, 2015. The External Review included a review for both the elementary and secondary during these dates. This was a public school AdvancED External Review.

The review began Wednesday evening, April 15, at 5:00 PM with a team orientation followed by the administrative presentation and informal dinner conversation with administration, Leadership team chairs, and members of the Fort Calhoun School Board.

The team members included a secondary administrator, secondary math instructor, two Educational Service Unit (ESU) representatives, and a Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Data, Research, and Evaluation leader. Team members completed both AdvancED elect certification training and AdvancED Team Member training prior to the External Review and also completed additional preparations prior to April 15-17, 2015. These preparations included reviewing all of the accreditation documents provided by the district and the resources added to the AdvancED Workspace by the Lead Evaluator, as well as a preliminary analysis of the information before arriving at the orientation session on April 15, 2015.

The Lead Evaluator maintained frequent phone and email contact with the team members prior to the External Review. Team members reviewed, studied, and analyzed various pieces of evidence provided by the district. During the orientation session, team members discussed initial insight, brainstormed questions for further explanation, and identified common themes that were starting to emerge. The deliberation process continued throughout the External Review until the pre-conference with the administrative team prior to the Oral Exit Review.

The Lead Evaluator began working with the district school improvement coordinator (who also serves as the Fort Calhoun elementary principal) in May of 2014--shortly after both received notification that they would be working together to prepare for the 2014-15 External Review. Dates for the review were identified in May of 2014, and a meeting was scheduled between the Lead Evaluator, Associate Lead, and Fort Calhoun administration on September 19, 2014. At this meeting, the AdvancED External Review schedule was finalized, the eleot observation schedule was discussed, and any remaining questions were answered. Communication between the district school improvement coordinator and Lead Evaluator was frequent and ensured a successful onsite External Review. A final conference call was conducted on Monday, April 13, 2015, to answer any remaining questions.

The district school improvement coordinator was conscientious and thorough as he led the preparation for the review. The Lead Evaluator and External Review Team was appreciative of the leadership and exceptional attention to detail.

On behalf of the External Review Team, the Lead Evaluator extends its congratulations on an exceptional review. The hospitality shown to the team was extraordinary as well as the thoroughness of the preparation for the review by both the elementary and the district administration and staff.

The transparency of the district in completing all accreditation documents, as well as its commitment to the AdvancED accreditation process, models the high expectations expected of all stakeholders.

It was a delight meeting both formally and informally with various stakeholders. District-wide interviews included the following: Administrators (5), Board Members (5), Instructional Staff (27), Students (32), Support Staff (14) and Parents/Community/Business Leaders (4), for a total of 87 interviews. Great pride exists among Fort Calhoun stakeholders as exemplified by the following quotes: 1) Superintendent: "You only get better if you hire good people." 2) Elementary Principal: "The Fort Calhoun superintendent is passionate about kids." and 3) Elementary staff member: "Our elementary principal is positive and engaged--and brings collaboration to our building."

Again, congratulations Fort Calhoun Elementary!

Stakeholders were interviewed by members of the External Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's effectiveness and student performance. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the External Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder



groups.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Superintendents	1
Board Members	5
Administrators	4
Instructional Staff	27
Support Staff	14
Students	32
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>

# 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 system has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve 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 school 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 school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
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.	3.00	2.88
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	2.80	2.53
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	3.00	2.67
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.00	2.78
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	2.40	2.63
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	3.00	2.66
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.00	2.58
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	4.00	3.12

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	2.60	3.07
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	2.77
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	3.00	2.57
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.00	2.71

## Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The school 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	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.00	2.72
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.	2.00	2.44
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	2.00	2.09
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	2.00	2.53
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	2.80	2.78

## Student Performance Diagnostic

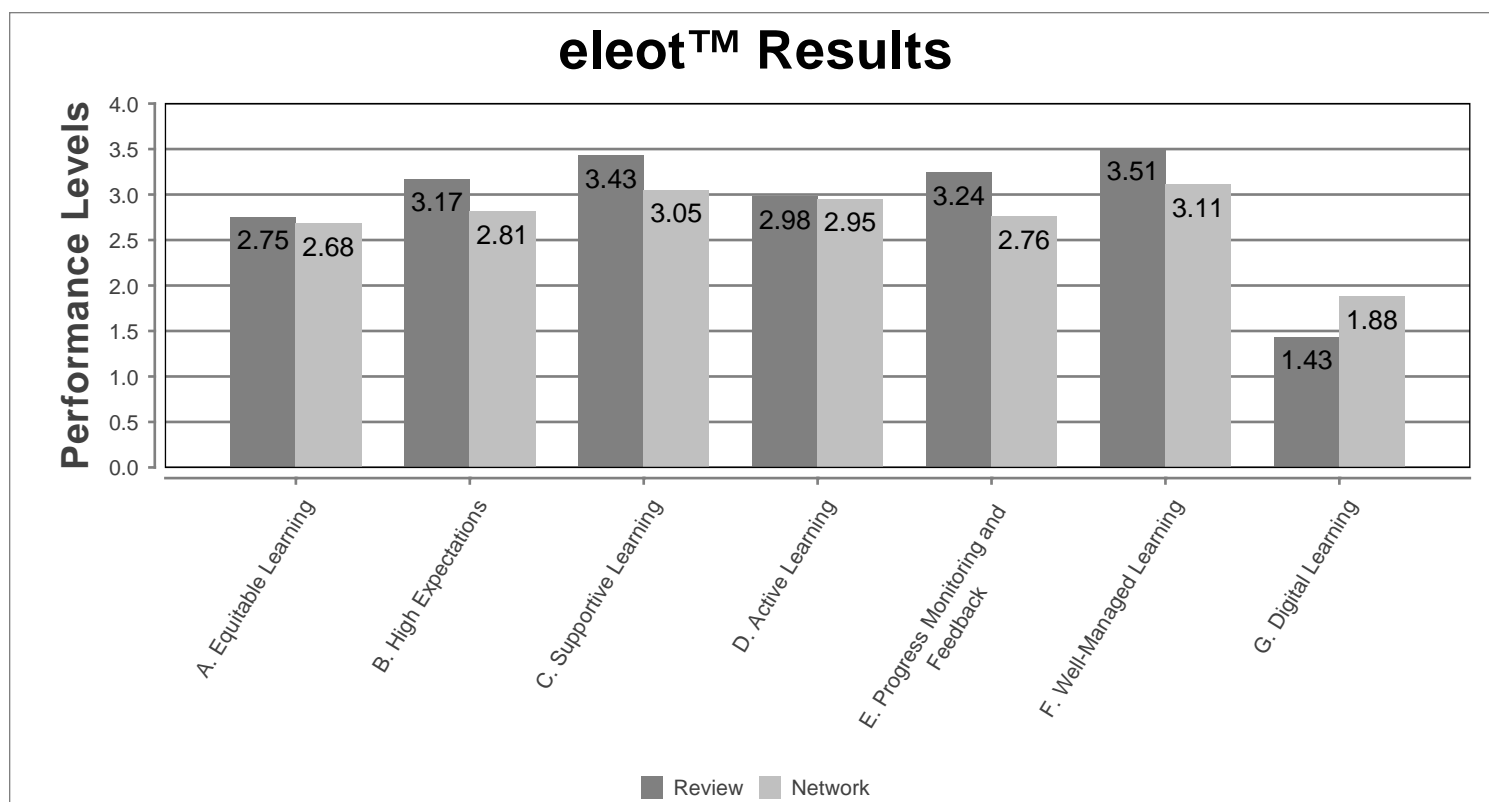
The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	4.00	3.10
Test Administration	4.00	3.47
Equity of Learning	3.00	2.74
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.98

# 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 External Review Team is required to be trained and pass a certification exam that establishes inter-rater reliability. Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale (4=very 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™ as well as benchmark results across the AdvancED Network.



Fourteen eleot observations were completed during the Fort Calhoun Elementary External Review. The External Review Team had the opportunity to observe a variety of classrooms including the following: Kindergarten, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade Reading, Kindergarten Social Skills, Title/Reading Specialist, Physical Education, Special Education, and High Ability Learners. These observations were conducted throughout the first day of the External Review enabling the team to observe a variety of classrooms and various time-periods.

The eleot observations demonstrated 6 out of 7 areas that were above the AdvancED Network (AEN) rating. The observations included a) Equitable Learning Environment (2.75 school; 2.68 AEN), b) High Expectations Environment (3.17 school; 2.81 AEN), c) Supportive Learning Environment (3.43 school; 3.05 AEN), d) Active Learning Environment (2.98 school; 2.95 AEN), e) Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment (3.24 school; 2.76 AEN) and f) Well-Managed Learning Environment (3.51 school; 3.11 AEN). The only category that was slightly below the AEN was Digital Learning Environment (1.43 school; 1.88 AEN).

Several eleot observations were well-above the AEN average including High Expectations Environment, Supportive Learning Environment, Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment, and Well-Managed Learning Environment. These are exceptional ratings and exemplify the building climate that models high expectations, learner support, and consistent and timely feedback for the learner.

It is common for districts and/or buildings to rate lower in the Digital Learning Environment. Fort Calhoun Elementary was slightly lower than the AEN rating; however, technology was used frequently by staff while facilitating instruction and supporting intervention activities. Even though staff were using technology frequently and effectively, the eleot for Digital Learning Environment focuses on technology use by students. As the Fort Calhoun elementary classrooms add more iPads to the classroom environment, staff will be able to provide more opportunities for learners to utilize technology throughout the class session(s). Creating a technology rich environment where students can use digital tools/technology to gather information for learning, to conduct research and solve problems and to effectively communicate and work collaboratively will continue to support a digital-rich learning environment.

Many Fort Calhoun Elementary eleot environments had powerful examples that supported the strong eleot ratings.

High Expectations and Well-Managed Learning Environment: Teachers utilized effective strategies to get students back-on-track if they were disengaged. Students also knew expectations ("let's use our quiet voices", "1-2-3 in your seats", etc.). Small group activities (learning centers) were clearly described. Students immediately began to work after transitioning, and the teacher prepared students for transitions by noting how much time before groups would move. It was clear students were taught routines and transition expectations. The teacher was also aware (demonstrating with-it-ness) of each small group and whether students were following directions or staying on task. Intervention activities were challenging and provided students with opportunities to work individually, with a partner, or with a small group.

When students had questions, teachers would respond by asking another question to provide students opportunities to apply critical thinking skills ("How do we solve this problem?"). Teachers and paraprofessionals were patient with students as they responded to questions. One student became visibly discouraged during a math activity. He was frustrated with his incorrect answers and became emotionally upset. The teacher supported this student by offering both encouragement and comfort, enabling the student to continue with the class activity.

Students frequently worked in table teams after reviewing the process for successful group interaction. Again, it was clear that students had been taught the expected behaviors for small group work. In addition, teachers frequently rewarded positive behavior encouraging all students to behave appropriately during the class session.

**Supportive Learning Environment:** Opportunities for students to take risks in learning were frequently provided. One particular mathematics lesson asked students to complete two-digit addition individually, compare answers with table team partners, and finally, volunteer to demonstrate the process at the whiteboard. During class discussions, students were provided support when answers were incorrect or unclear. Many classrooms had paraprofessionals in the classroom to provide additional support for students. This practice demonstrates a commitment by the building and district to meet learner needs and increase learner success.

**Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment:** Frequent, formative assessment was provided throughout elect observed classrooms. Learners were asked to share their learning with table team partners and to use hand signals to signify understanding (1 finger, 2 fingers, etc.).

Learners also completed iPad assessments after reading activities, worked in small groups to complete intervention activities while receiving immediate feedback from the teacher, paraprofessional and/or peers, and participated in a NeSA-R (Nebraska State Assessment-Reading) simulation using a practice reading passage. These types of experiences support the building and district mission statement: The mission of the Fort Calhoun Community Schools is to Foster Learning in an inspiring and caring environment; provide Opportunities for all students to be successful; instill the attributes of Respect and Responsibility among staff and students alike; and present students with the Tools to Succeed in life.

Fort Calhoun elementary classrooms modeled learner engagement, well-managed learning environments, and high expectations for all. Both staff and paraprofessionals were working with students in a variety of settings (full-group, small group, individual). In addition, the elementary principal was visible throughout the day: welcoming students as they arrived each morning and as they left at the end of the day, interacting with students during lunch supervision, walking the building during the first hour and throughout the day, and meeting with students and staff as pertinent. These examples highlight the positive impact of the Fort Calhoun elementary leadership, as well as district administrative leadership, to promote the district mission statement, model high expectations for all (staff, students and stakeholders), and a commitment to excellence.

The sense of "family", as described during the administrative presentation and stakeholder interviews, permeates the culture of Fort Calhoun.



# eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.71	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	35.71%	14.29%	35.71%	14.29%
2.	3.57	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	57.14%	42.86%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	3.50	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	57.14%	35.71%	7.14%	0.00%
4.	1.21	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	0.00%	7.14%	7.14%	85.71%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.75						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.36	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	42.86%	50.00%	7.14%	0.00%
2.	3.50	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	2.79	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	7.14%	71.43%	14.29%	7.14%
4.	3.50	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
5.	2.71	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	14.29%	50.00%	28.57%	7.14%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.17						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.50	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
2.	3.50	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	3.50	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
4.	3.36	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	42.86%	50.00%	7.14%	0.00%
5.	3.29	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	35.71%	57.14%	7.14%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.43						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.14	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	42.86%	35.71%	14.29%	7.14%
2.	2.21	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	14.29%	21.43%	35.71%	28.57%
3.	3.57	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	57.14%	42.86%	0.00%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.98						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.07	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	21.43%	64.29%	14.29%	0.00%
2.	3.36	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	50.00%	35.71%	14.29%	0.00%
3.	3.57	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	57.14%	42.86%	0.00%	0.00%
4.	3.07	Understands how her/his work is assessed	28.57%	50.00%	21.43%	0.00%
5.	3.14	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	35.71%	50.00%	7.14%	7.14%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.24						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.64	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	64.29%	35.71%	0.00%	0.00%
2.	3.64	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	64.29%	35.71%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	3.71	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	71.43%	28.57%	0.00%	0.00%
4.	2.86	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	42.86%	28.57%	0.00%	28.57%
5.	3.71	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	71.43%	28.57%	0.00%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.51						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.00	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	0.00%	42.86%	14.29%	42.86%
2.	1.21	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	0.00%	7.14%	7.14%	85.71%
3.	1.07	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	92.86%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.43						

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Create a systematic professional learning plan to increase all staff comprehension and use of data.  
(Indicators 5.2)

#### Evidence and Rationale

Frequently, staff meet to analyze data or learn new instructional strategies during periodic professional development. Even though the Accreditation Report notes the implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs), staff reported inconsistent PLC processes and procedures for examining data. Developing a consistent PLC vision, including protocols and processes, will create a structure for effective data analysis, professional dialogue, and the implementation of effective instructional strategies.

Consistent, system-wide Professional Learning Community structures and practices enable districts to create a shared vision, collaborative partnerships, and opportunities for increased student achievement.

### Opportunity for Improvement

Analyze, review, and communicate K-12 curriculum to ensure students are prepared for the skills at the next level.  
(Indicators 3.2)

#### Evidence and Rationale

Interviews indicated that much of the time staff have met K-12 has been to complete AdvancED requirements. There is a desire by staff to inform and align current curriculum and make adjustments as needed. That can only be done when staff meet consistently over time in their departments.

Having a defined and articulated K-12 curriculum will ensure less redundancy and instructional gaps leading to a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

### **Opportunity for Improvement**

Develop professional learning communities that implement a district-wide instructional model.

(Indicators 3.5)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

Staff report meeting in small learning teams on a consistent basis; however, these small teams could be enhanced by implementing the professional learning community (PLC) model. Equipping staff with the skills needed to effectively implement professional learning communities (protocols, data analysis, and discussion tools) would serve as an effective model for analyzing student achievement data and promoting consistent implementation of the Marzano instructional model. This process could also incorporate elements of the district evaluation model--including a focus on the Marzano instructional model and insight gained from instructional rounds. Professional learning communities would provide an avenue for consistent, effective communication across the entire district.

Effective professional learning communities require consistent protocols for implementation. PLCs can be an effective model for implementing the district instructional framework, analyzing student achievement data, and incorporating professional learning that supports the growth of all staff.

### **Powerful Practice**

The staff effectively engages all students.

(Indicators 3.3)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

During the eleot observations, as well as informal classroom observations, staff facilitated a variety of engaging lessons. These lessons included large-group instruction with formative assessments throughout to keep all learners engaged in the learning. Other classrooms modeled small group learning centers where students were reading books in pairs and then completing assessments on their iPad, working with partners to complete enrichment activities, and finally, meeting with the classroom teacher with mini-lessons. Other classrooms modeled student engagement by volunteering for at-the-board activities, completing scavenger hunts, and reviewing their practice NeSA assessment. The shared vision and values of the district focusing on high expectations and providing individual, student support were consistently modeled throughout the elementary building.

Engaging learners in their educational experience, both inside and outside the classroom, increases learner retention and strengthens learning and achievement.

# 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 more than 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	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	3.20	2.75
1.2	The school's 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.	3.80	3.04
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.00	2.61

## Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	3.80	2.98
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.60	2.96
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.	3.80	3.18
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	3.80	3.13
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	3.40	2.82
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	3.00	2.82

## Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys (student, parent, and teacher) 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 External 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 External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the administration of the surveys by institution, survey results, and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.38
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00	3.08

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Create a systematic professional learning plan to increase all staff comprehension and use of data.  
(Indicators 5.2)

#### Evidence and Rationale

Frequently, staff meet to analyze data or learn new instructional strategies during periodic professional development. Even though the Accreditation Report notes the implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs), staff reported inconsistent PLC processes and procedures for examining data. Developing a consistent PLC vision, including protocols and processes, will create a structure for effective data analysis, professional dialogue, and the implementation of effective instructional strategies.

Consistent, system-wide Professional Learning Community structures and practices enable districts to create a shared vision, collaborative partnerships, and opportunities for increased student achievement.

### Improvement Priority

Document the leadership blueprint for mission, communication, policies, processes, and procedures to support sustained implementation and transition.  
(Indicators 2.1)

#### Evidence and Rationale

Many effective leadership structures are in place at Fort Calhoun. The district vision and mission are reviewed annually, are visible throughout the building, and are communicated effectively to all stakeholders. In addition, district policies, processes, and procedures are up-to-date and communicated across the district. Implementing these processes forward is the goal of the current school board and administrative leadership.



To ensure these effective practices continue during school board and administrative transitions, create a document that depicts the vision and implementation steps that will continue to seamlessly carry the district forward.

A detailed blueprint documenting the district's leadership plan, effectively communicated to stakeholders, ensures effective processes continue during leadership transition.

### **Opportunity for Improvement**

Select or develop an effective district-wide evaluation instrument that improves professional practice. (Indicators 2.6)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

Selecting or developing a district-wide evaluation system will move the district forward and further support the implementation of the Marzano instructional model. The district-wide evaluation system should include administrative, certified, and classified staff evaluation. Examining current practice, in collaboration with best practice, will provide opportunities for review, reflection, and redesign of the current evaluation system. Professional evaluations, including administrative walk-throughs, should provide opportunities for staff to reflect on their own practice, analysis of student achievement data, and the development of an individual professional development plan. Having a common instructional framework communicated across the district will provide the Administrative leadership team, in partnership with staff, to speak a common language. This instructional framework will also guide the reflective conversations between administration and staff, promote targeted professional development for all staff, and keep an intentional focus on increased student achievement.

Having a common district-wide evaluation instrument and data collection tool will provide focused instructional dialogue as well as many opportunities for reflective practice by all staff. Data collected and analyzed from the evaluation instrument and data collection tool, along-with reflective conversations between administrators and staff, should be used to create professional development that increases the instructional capacity of all staff.

### **Powerful Practice**

The collaboration of the school board and the leadership team has fostered a commitment to district-wide excellence. (Indicators 2.5)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

Many examples of shared collaboration among the school board and administrative leadership team model a commitment to district-wide excellent. The administrative leadership team reorganized administrative duties to ensure the elementary principal was able to focus on instructional leadership in his building. This decision, supported by the school board, led to a unified plan to strengthen learning for all students and provide increased and timely communication for all stakeholders. The elementary principal serves as the school improvement coordinator as well as building instructional leader. A full-time special education director was hired and a new PreK-8 Guidance Counselor will be added to the certified staff for 2015-16. These examples demonstrate a commitment by the school board and administrative leadership team to best meet the needs of

all PreK-6 students.

The leadership team fosters consistent purpose and direction. The school board has allowed autonomy so that the administration can manage day-to-day operations effectively.

### **Powerful Practice**

The district demonstrates a strong unified vision and systematic communication to build multiple collaboration opportunities.

(Indicators 1.2)

#### *Evidence and Rationale*

The district culture is focused on the learning experiences of all students as indicated by the universal mission that Fort Calhoun Elementary will "do what is best for kids." There is a synergy of purpose by all stakeholders with the sense that all partners are moving in the same direction--forward--with a clear focus on increased student achievement and meeting the physical, emotional, and social needs of all learners. A variety of communication avenues are available to all district stakeholders whether automated voice and text messages, monthly newsletters, or the district website which is also available via mobile app. This clear focus, communicated across the district, drives all decisions by district leadership: school board members, administrators, instructional leaders, and both certified and classified staff.

When the mission/vision guides all decision-making and is clearly communicated to stakeholders, district actions guide and lead to informed and accepted practice.

## 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 more than 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 and ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

## Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
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.	3.00	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	3.20	3.00
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.00	3.11
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	3.00	2.83
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	3.00	2.56

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.40	2.89
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	2.20	2.80

# Conclusion

Administrative leadership and expectations create a culture for high expectations and student learning at Fort Calhoun Elementary. Each year, a theme is implemented that creates the focus for the current school year. During 2014-15, the theme was "Hooked on Learning" complete with both opening day activities and learning activities throughout the school year supporting learning for all students. The elementary purpose statement, "Engaging + Learning + Achieving = Productive PIONEERS," supports the district mission statement and is displayed throughout the building and included in various stakeholder communications.

Learning targets, supporting the implementation of Marzano's Instructional Framework, are visible in classrooms. Instructional rounds are utilized throughout the building. Staff open their classrooms for observation as well as many participate in Instructional round observations of other classrooms.

Administration and data instructional leaders facilitate "Data Parties" to analyze building and district student achievement data (Nebraska State Accountability assessment for writing, reading, mathematics, and science (NeSA), and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). In addition, student goal-setting is implemented to support MAP progress for each participating learner. During the time of the External Review, posters created by parents had been added to student lockers encouraging their child to do well on their NeSA and MAP assessments.

Communication is exceptional at both the elementary and district level. The new logo is prominently displayed everywhere (a marketing campaign that is associated with the district vision and mission). Automated phone and text messages are used to keep families up-to-date regarding building and district activities. A monthly newsletter is distributed through the elementary principal's office. The elementary principal writes the "Weekly Buzz" to keep the staff updated. The district website is frequently updated and easily navigated, and a version is specifically designed for the mobile platform. The administration provides a staff update following each board meeting (secondary staff before school on the day after the board meeting and an elementary staff update after school the same day). The annual report is accurate, timely, attractive, and filled with celebrations, achievement information, and district demographics. It is an excellent resource as stakeholders "do their research" when evaluating Fort Calhoun as a potential district for option-enrolling their children.

Stakeholder input identified the need for a K-8 Guidance Counselor. The district took the information seriously and created the K-8 position. The guidance counselor will provide additional support for the physical, emotional, and social needs of all elementary learners.

The elementary staff and administrative climate and expectations exemplify a shared vision for learner success and achievement.

Many processes are in place at Fort Calhoun Elementary--providing a clear focus for success. To ensure continued success as well as challenge the building and district to keep the focus on continuous improvement, opportunities exist. These opportunities include the implementation of consistent protocols for professional learning communities, K-12 curriculum alignment, and the development of a district-wide evaluation model

connected to the district instructional framework. Two Improvement Priorities also exist focusing on consistent data literacy for all staff, and the development of a detailed blueprint describing the exceptional and visionary leadership of school board and administration.

Each of these Opportunities for Improvement and Improvement Priorities consist of many action steps. As a building and as a district, identify the most important priorities that will lead to continued student success. Do not assume too many long-range projects at the same time; this will over-commit the administration and staff and limit success. However, do not avoid tackling any of the Opportunities for Improvement; Fort Calhoun is poised to embrace these next steps. The Opportunities for Improvement will provide Powerful Practices for moving the elementary building and district forward.

The district will need to respond to the two Improvement Priorities within the next two years for continued AdvancED Accreditation. Utilizing educational partners to complete the Improvement Priorities provides opportunities for collaboration, implementation of best practices, and a shared commitment with Fort Calhoun Elementary as well as the district. Distribute leadership to keep the work moving forward in a timely, effective and efficient manner. Shared leadership ensures school improvement efforts continue regardless of administrative and/or staff changes.

The Improvement Priorities provide a roadmap for continued growth and improvement at Fort Calhoun Elementary as well as the district. Equipping administration and staff with data literacy skills assures effective professional learning community discussions and action planning. When administration and staff are confident "what the data says," they are able to develop effective strategies to support all learners. Providing the necessary professional development to support staff data literacy will ensure long-term benefits.

In addition, creating a blueprint that describes the visionary leadership by both school board and administration will provide documentation that supports the district for years to come. The blueprint will enable leadership to reflect on the successful processes implemented at Fort Calhoun--and provide an avenue for continued success regardless of staffing and/or leadership transition. The success, achievement and pride displayed at both Fort Calhoun Elementary and across the district is a result of intentional vision, planning and implementation. This documented process can ensure seamless continuous school improvement efforts regardless of transitional changes. Fort Calhoun's current process is exceptional and would serve as a model for other Nebraska districts that need a visionary and organizational process that will challenge them to reach their place of greatest potential. As Fort Calhoun creates the blueprint, it is imperative that the document denotes a vision that will continue to stretch and challenge them to grow as both a building and a district--continuing to achieve success for every student.

## Improvement Priorities

The institution should use the findings from this review to guide the continuous improvement process. The institution must address the Improvement Priorities listed below:

- Create a systematic professional learning plan to increase all staff comprehension and use of data.
- Document the leadership blueprint for mission, communication, policies, processes, and procedures to

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support sustained implementation and transition.

# Accreditation Recommendation

## 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. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus.

The IEQ™ comprises 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).

	External Review IEQ Score	AdvancED Network Average
Overall Score	304.62	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	288.57	274.14
Leadership Capacity	349.09	296.08
Resource Utilization	282.86	286.32

The IEQ™ results include information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria as well as to other institutions in the AdvancED Network. The institution should use the information in this report, including the corresponding performance rubrics, to identify specific areas of improvement.

Consequently, the External Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the institution earn the distinction of accreditation for a five-year term. AdvancED will review the results of the External Review to make a final determination including the appropriate next steps for the institution in response to these findings.



# Addenda

## Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Rhonda L Jindra	Rhonda Jindra began her educational career as the Family & Consumer Sciences educator at Orchard Public School, Orchard, NE. She continued in this position for 17 years. In August of 2000, she began her role as a Staff Developer at Educational Service Unit #1 (ESU #1) in Wakefield, NE. As a staff developer, she assists 22 school districts with professional development in the areas of continuous school improvement, curriculum alignment, instructional strategies and assessment. In addition, she currently serves as the AdvancED ESU #1 Coach for 2 of the Native American districts, Walthill and Winnebago. Rhonda also serves on the Nebraska State Council for AdvancED, as well as Adjunct Faculty for Wayne State College, Wayne, Nebraska, teaching in the areas of Education and Family & Consumer Sciences.
Dr. Dennis McGuire	Dennis is currently in his seventh year working as a Management Consultant in Accreditation and School Improvement at the Nebraska Department of Education. He holds a bachelor's degree from St. Benedict's College, two masters' degrees from the University of Nebraska and Kansas State University respectively, and a doctorate from Kansas State University. His professional experience spans over 45 years serving as a secondary and college instructor and administrator. He has been published by the National Council of Teachers of English and the Kansas Association of Teachers of English. He has served as team member and chair on numerous accreditation reviews in Nebraska as well as Kansas, Wyoming, and South Dakota.
Mrs. Cindy Boss	Cindy has been teaching math for 24 years and is currently teaching high school math. She has taught at both small and large school districts in the state of Nebraska and earned her Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction as well as additional graduate hours in mathematics in order to teach math for dual credit. Her classroom experience is in secondary ed having been in middle schools, high schools, and college level classrooms as well as coordinating both an enrichment and HAL program. She has previously served as her math department chair and district wide math team. In this capacity she was able to facilitate the development and refinement the K-12 math curriculum for School District 145. She has been a part of an AdvancED team each of the previous two years serving as both team member and co-lead evaluator.
Mr. David Friedli	David Friedli is a "used to be". He "used to be" a teacher and a coach. He "used to be" the project director for Toward a Drug Free Nebraska, a state-wide drug and alcohol prevention training program of the Department of Education. Currently, he is the junior-senior high school principal for Conestoga Public Schools, a consolidated district south of the Omaha metro area in eastern Nebraska. Dave is active in civic and church activities, including directing a summer camp. He "used to be" a pretty good golfer, but now plays guitar more often now because it does not have sand traps or out-of-bounds.
Mr. Matt Heusman	Matt Heusman currently works as a specialist in Data, Research, and Evaluation at Nebraska Department of Education. Prior to his work at NDE, Matt worked in staff development for Salina Public Schools in Salina, Kansas as a Instructional Technologist. He began his career in education also with Salina Public Schools as a sixth grade classroom teacher. Matt holds a master's degree in Instructional Design and Technology and a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, both from Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas.

Member	Brief Biography
Mr. Rick Williams	<p>Richard earned degrees from Midland Lutheran College (1973) BA, Soc. Sci. Composite. Masters from UNL in Administration (1980), and a Specialist from UNL in 1985. He had educational employment at Ohioa Public School as a social studies/PE/coach from 1974-1978. He was the Jr/Sr High principal and A.D. at Ansley Public Schools (1978-1985). Richard was the Jr/Sr High principal and A.D. at Mead Public from 1985-1990. Continued as a high school principal at Wahoo Public Schools (1990-2005). Currently he is a technology trainer at ESU 2 in Fremont, NE. Richard works with administrators, teachers and students improving engagement in schools.</p>

## Next Steps

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the Powerful Practices section to maximize their impact on the institution.
3. Consider the Opportunities for Improvement identified throughout the report that are provided by the team in the spirit of continuous improvement and the institution's commitment to improving its capacity to improve student learning.
4. Develop action plans to address the Improvement Priorities identified by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Improvement Priorities.
5. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
6. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Improvement Priorities. Institutions are required to respond to all Improvement Priorities. The report will be reviewed at the appropriate state, national, and/or international levels to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to address the Improvement Priorities. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the responses to the Improvement Priorities and the resulting improvement.
7. Continue to meet the AdvancED Standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

## 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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