Report of the
External Review Team
for
Fort Calhoun High School

1506 Lincoln St
P.O. box 430
Fort Calhoun
NE 68023-5373
US

Dr. Donald Johnson
Superintendent

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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 at 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 eleot 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 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 AdvancED External Review. The Lead Evaluator and AdvancED External Review were appreciative of his 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 secondary 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) Secondary staff member: "We have a network of support. We are just trying to help kids" and 3) Support Staff member: "We are valued by administration, parents, board, and students."

Again, congratulations Fort Calhoun High School!

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
Total	**87**

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.	2.00	2.78
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	2.20	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.	3.00	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.	3.80	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.	3.60	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.	2.00	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.	3.00	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.
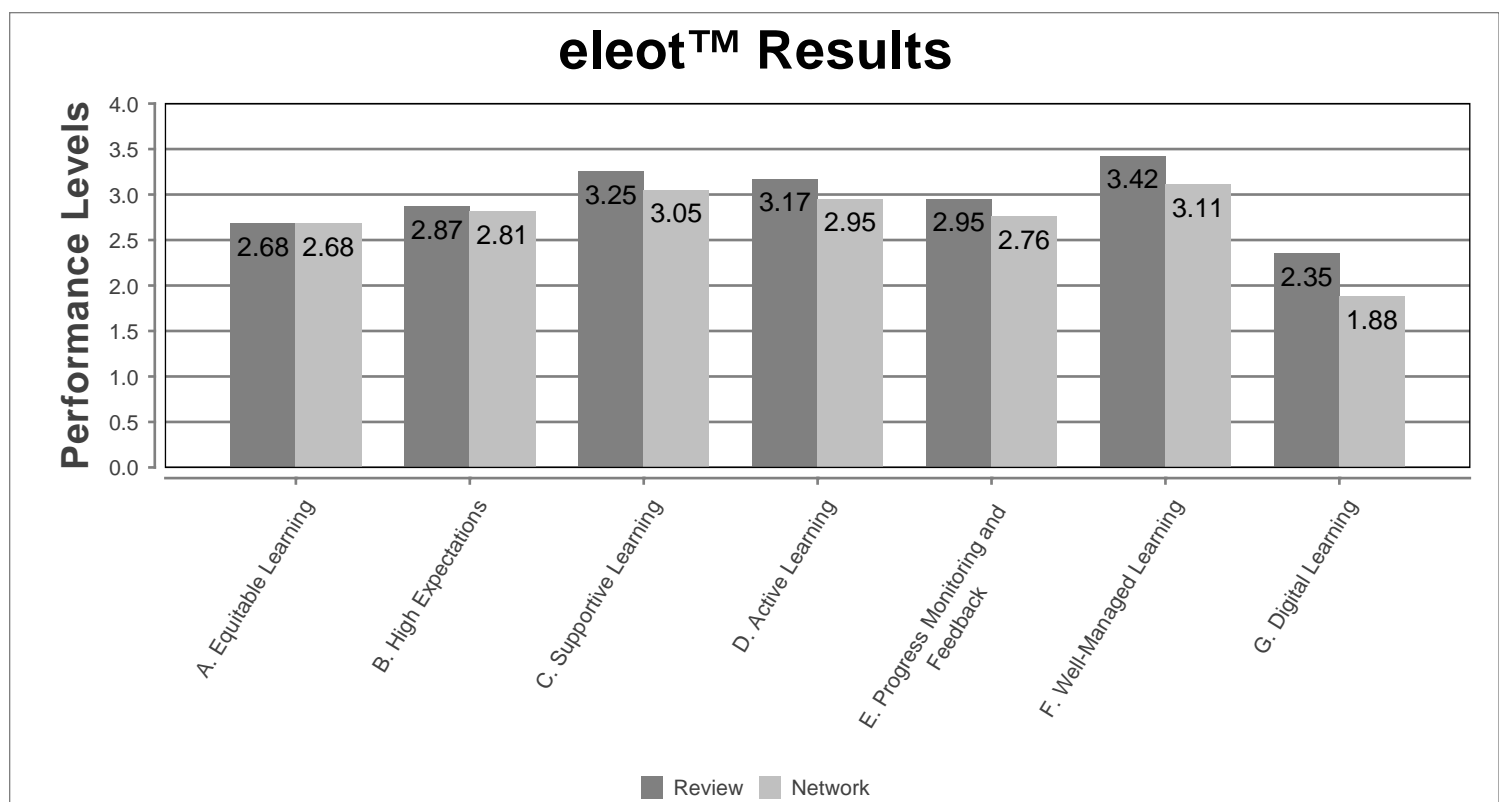
Twenty-one eleot observations were completed during the Fort Calhoun Secondary External Review. The External Review Team had the opportunity to observe a variety of classrooms including the following: Life Skills, English, Science, Spanish, Special Education, Physical Education, Math, Business, Band, and Choir. 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 7 out of 7 areas that were at or above the AdvancED Network (AEN) rating. The observations included a) Equitable Learning Environment (2.68 school; 2.68 AEN), b) High Expectations Environment (2.87 school; 2.81 AEN), c) Supportive Learning Environment (3.25 school; 3.05 AEN), d) Active Learning Environment (3.17 school; 2.95 AEN), e) Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment (2.9 school; 2.76 AEN), f) Well-Managed Learning Environment (3.42 school; 3.11 AEN) and Digital Learning Environment (2.35 school; 1.88 AEN).

Several eleot observations were well-above the AEN average including Supportive Learning Environment, Active Learning Environment, Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment, Well-Managed Learning Environment, and Digital 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. However, Fort Calhoun Secondary was significantly above the AEN rating. The eleot for Digital Learning Environment focuses on technology use by students. Since Fort Calhoun Secondary implemented the 1:1 initiative four years ago and has been recognized as an Apple Distinguished School for 2013-15, use of technology by both staff and students has significantly increased each year. The graduating class of 2015 will be the first class that had access to iPads throughout all four years of their high school career. During eleot observations, it was evident that both staff and students use technology effectively to support teaching and learning. iPads were used to gather information, create original works of art, and effectively communicate and collaborate with peers and other stakeholders.

Several examples highlight the powerfully effective use of technology by students. These include the following: During one Spanish observation, all instruction and conversation was in Spanish. Students had used technology to research and collect photographs to support their version of a "dream home." Students created a PowerPoint to highlight their learning and presented it to the class--all in Spanish. After each presentation, the teacher asked 1-2 probing questions, and students thoughtfully responded in Spanish.

Junior High students used Media Center computers to write and revise a descriptive essay about mythical creatures. Prior to writing, students conducted research using various forms of technology.

Students were using iPads to complete homework in the Commons Area of the high school.

During English, students were studying vocabulary words. As words were presented, students looked up definitions using their iPad and also wrote complete sentences using the vocabulary word. After the vocabulary lesson, teacher and students used a formative assessment application called Kahoot. This application provided immediate feedback for both teacher and students.

Spanish students were creating an instructional recipe video. Before beginning their project, they reviewed other Spanish recipe videos (poor examples, strong examples, etc.). After reviewing the videos, there was a full-class discussion, in Spanish, regarding pros/cons of the various Spanish videos the students had

examined. Students then used this insight to begin working on their own instructional recipe video.

Students used iPads to create graphic organizers to build on prior knowledge and map advanced concepts.

In the school library, a "Readbox" was displayed along one wall. The QR codes in the "Readbox" led to original, student-created digital audio books.

Staff were intentional about telling students when to open their iPad and what to do during that time. Then, students were asked to close their device so that they could fully concentrate on the teacher and/or class discussion.

Continuing to effectively use the technology rich environment at Fort Calhoun provides exceptional opportunities for students to use digital tools/technology to gather information for learning, to conduct research, to solve problems, and to effectively communicate and work collaboratively. the External review Team encourages the school to continue to build upon the impressive technology rich environment (resources, equipment, effective technology integration by staff, etc.) that is already in place.

Supportive Learning Environment and Well-Managed Learning Environment: Fort Calhoun Secondary modeled consistent teacher interaction with students.

Teachers were actively engaged and moving around the classroom throughout the lesson--available to students as they worked. During this time, teachers guided the learning process, provided feedback, and when needed, corrected behavior. On the rare occasion for behavior correction, students were redirected with respectful, professional guidance, and without undue emotion. Because of the unusual facility arrangement, students, staff, and visitors sometimes needed to pass through one classroom to get to another room. Classroom activities continued without interruption and those passing through the classroom showed respect to classes as instruction continued.

Students were respectful and self-disciplined. Routines, procedures, and protocols are in place to ensure the best opportunities for students to benefit from their time in school. Students were well aware how to transition smoothly from one activity to another to complete tasks and activities. Since teachers were moving throughout the room, they were constantly aware of students and what they were doing (or not doing).

Active Learning Environment: Classrooms observed modeled several active learning environments. The environments included partner discussions, small group discussions, group work in a lab situation, a choir practicing as a large group, and a teacher facilitating a mini-lecture followed by small group work. In one classroom, an instructor was observed using a video to facilitate a discussion. The instructor would strategically stop the video, highlight the critical content within the video, relate it to the students' past learning experiences, and give students brief opportunities to discuss.

During a choir observation, students were patient and self-disciplined when working through a particularly difficult musical passage. Students were quiet and respectful as the director described and demonstrated the

desired result. After working through three more attempts and finally achieving success--students expressed satisfaction with the accomplished task.

Students are held accountable for their learning. They are not "let off the hook" by teachers. During a small group discussion, while checking for understanding, the teacher referred the group to a particular place in the book to clarify ideas. In addition, a student was observed working on a homework sheet and was frequently encouraged by the teacher to keep moving forward. Each time, as the teacher walked past the student, they would mark on the student's homework sheet to identify where the student was--and challenge them to work toward the next goal before they returned.

In addition, teachers did not lecture for a full class period. Rather, information was given in short bursts and then followed by students completing an activity or specific task. During one science class, the teacher shared small chunks of information using whole body movement to help students connect information. Students then repeated the information to each other and finally, one student shared the information with the whole class. It was a very positive example of students assuming the role of teacher and being fully engaged in an active learning environment.

Digital Learning Environment: Many examples of Fort Calhoun's digital learning environment have been highlighted.

To reiterate, students were actively engaged in the use of technology (media computers, iPads, etc.). They used digital tools to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning (researching Spanish recipe videos, creating essays about mythical creatures). Digital tools/technology were used to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning (Readbox QR codes that led to original, student-created digital audio books, etc.). And finally, digital tools/technology were used to communicate and work collaboratively for learning (Spanish dream home presentations and formative assessments such as Kahoot).

Fort Calhoun secondary 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 intentional integration of technology supports the 1:1 initiative and district mission statement: The mission of 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.

The many observations, both formal and informal, conducted throughout the AdvancED External Review highlighted the positive impact of the Fort Calhoun secondary 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	23.81%	47.62%	4.76%	23.81%
2.	3.62	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	66.67%	28.57%	4.76%	0.00%
3.	2.90	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	19.05%	52.38%	28.57%	0.00%
4.	1.48	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	9.52%	0.00%	19.05%	71.43%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.68						

B. High Expectations			**%**			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.33	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	42.86%	47.62%	9.52%	0.00%
2.	3.48	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	52.38%	42.86%	4.76%	0.00%
3.	2.38	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	23.81%	19.05%	28.57%	28.57%
4.	2.86	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	19.05%	52.38%	23.81%	4.76%
5.	2.29	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	23.81%	4.76%	47.62%	23.81%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.87						

C. Supportive Learning				%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**		**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.19	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive		28.57%	61.90%	9.52%	0.00%
2.	3.29	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning		38.10%	52.38%	9.52%	0.00%
3.	3.14	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)		33.33%	52.38%	9.52%	4.76%
4.	3.52	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks		61.90%	28.57%	9.52%	0.00%
5.	3.10	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs		38.10%	38.10%	19.05%	4.76%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.25							

D. Active Learning				%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**		**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.10	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students		47.62%	23.81%	19.05%	9.52%
2.	2.90	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences		42.86%	14.29%	33.33%	9.52%
3.	3.52	Is actively engaged in the learning activities		61.90%	28.57%	9.52%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.17							

This report is pending final approval by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.00	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	38.10%	33.33%	19.05%	9.52%
2.	3.10	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	38.10%	38.10%	19.05%	4.76%
3.	3.24	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	33.33%	57.14%	9.52%	0.00%
4.	2.43	Understands how her/his work is assessed	19.05%	28.57%	28.57%	23.81%
5.	3.00	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	38.10%	33.33%	19.05%	9.52%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.95						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.57	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	71.43%	14.29%	14.29%	0.00%
2.	3.67	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	71.43%	23.81%	4.76%	0.00%
3.	3.29	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	57.14%	19.05%	19.05%	4.76%
4.	3.10	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	57.14%	9.52%	19.05%	14.29%
5.	3.48	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	57.14%	33.33%	9.52%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.42						

This report is pending final approval by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

G. Digital Learning				%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.10	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	52.38%	23.81%	4.76%	19.05%
2.	2.05	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	23.81%	9.52%	14.29%	52.38%
3.	1.90	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	19.05%	4.76%	23.81%	52.38%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.35							

Findings

Improvement Priority

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

(Indicators 5.2)

Evidence and Rationale

Fort Calhoun leadership highlighted the need to build capacity using data in the district. Observations by the External Review Team validated the leadership's assessment. Identifying, maintaining, and monitoring sources of data creates a foundation of knowledge to foster collaboration, highlight successful programs, and help identify evolving needs of both students and the district. Systematic professional learning dedicated to data will benefit the district in many ways. The understanding, use, and analysis of data helps support district efforts to implement a districtwide instructional framework. Use of data to communicate information offers a transparent look at the direction, goals, and opportunities for the district. Data literacy is a fundamental component to differentiated instruction, teacher evaluation, and program monitoring. Data use and analysis is the cornerstone of making decisions grounded and supported with evidence.

Implementing a systematic professional learning plan focused on data helps develop a common language, support for the district's vision, and build evidence for program and process efficacy.

Opportunity for Improvement

Analyze effective grading practices to reflect changing curricular offerings and expectations.

(Indicators 3.10)

Evidence and Rationale

Students and parents indicated a desire for an examination of grading practices to reflect the rigor and expectations of coursework. As more students take advantage of college and dual-credit courses, a re-examination of grading practices and procedures is needed. There is a sense some students have "gone the extra mile" academically, but their effort is not recognized. Students also expressed their high school transcript is compared to surrounding schools, sometimes putting them at a disadvantage when applying for scholarships or college entrance.

Common grading expectations and practices by teachers supports student academic excellence.

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
Through interviews, stakeholders indicated a desire for teachers to have a clear understanding of both vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment in order to assure student success at the next level and provide support for students who have special needs.

During review of curriculum and communication between all teachers grades K-12, depth of knowledge, mastery and introduction of concepts will be made clear at each level. Through this collaboration process, teachers will be able to more efficiently determine how and why they teach what they teach within a given academic year in order to assure and support student success.

Opportunity for Improvement
Develop professional learning communities that foster the implementation of a district-wide instructional model.
(Indicators 3.5)

Evidence and Rationale
Data drives some decision making. In the classroom, teacher decisions are grounded in the instructional practices expected by the district. A number of teachers have participated in the Marzano Academy, and classroom visits indicate administrators are beginning to institutionalize some instructional strategies, particularly the posting and systematic referral to learning targets. Staff describes themselves as "ankle-deep in Marzano." One teacher said, "We know our test scores are high, but we need to be sure our students are learning." Professional learning communities and district professional development can use the expertise of those knowledgable in this model to train those who have not yet had formal exposure to the model, ensuring common language and practice. During interviews, teachers indicated a desire to use their professional development time to learn how to use data from NWEA, NeSA tests, and other assessments to make informed instructional decisions as they directly impact and support student learning. Teachers are looking for information to assist students in transition from one grade level to another and from building to building.

By examining data and identifying effective instructional strategies supported by the analysis, teachers will be

able to make informed decisions about how instructional strategies directly impact student success.

Powerful Practice

The staff effectively engages all students.

(Indicators 3.3)

Evidence and Rationale

During both formal and informal instruction and supervision throughout the school day, staff models the shared vision and values of the district, upholding high expectations and providing individual support to all students. In classroom observations, students were engaged in conversations with others in the room in order to deepen understanding and demonstrate knowledge of concepts and skills. Frequent "changes of state" allowed students the opportunity to take brain breaks and re-focus attention to make smooth transitions between activities. Students expressed their enthusiasm with the classroom activities both verbally and through visual clues.

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.	3.00	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.	4.00	2.98
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.80	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.	4.00	3.18
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	4.00	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

Fort Calhoun leadership highlighted the need to build capacity using data in the district. Observations by the External Review Team validated the leadership's assessment. Identifying, maintaining, and monitoring sources of data creates a foundation of knowledge to foster collaboration, highlight successful programs, and help identify evolving needs of both students and the district. Systematic professional learning dedicated to data will benefit the district in many ways. The understanding, use, and analysis of data helps support district efforts to implement a districtwide instructional framework. Use of data to communicate information offers a transparent look at the direction, goals, and opportunities for the district. Data literacy is a fundamental component to differentiated instruction, teacher evaluation, and program monitoring. Data use and analysis is the cornerstone of making decisions grounded and supported with evidence.

Implementing a systematic professional learning plan focused on data helps develop a common language, support for the district's vision, and build evidence for program and process efficacy.

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

Throughout all interviews, stakeholders identified that the "FORT mission" begins with the leadership team of administrators. Stakeholders credit the actions of the administrators as the starting point for the direction, innovation, success, and culture of the school system. Collaborating with the school board, the administrators have created a network of support across the district. Stakeholders describe personal and individual stories of how administrators made a personal, specific difference in the lives of students and staff. There is a decision making process in place, and a way those decisions are implemented. To ensure continued district success, that process should be outlined and documented. Three district principals are currently pursuing their supervisory certificate, and transition of leadership in schools is inevitable. The "blueprint" of leadership has proven to be successful in the district; and the vision, strategies, and purposeful action need to be documented to enable a smooth transition during times of change.

The decisions and actions of leadership are critical to school success, and a strategy to ensure ongoing strong leadership is essential.

Opportunity for Improvement

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

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with administrators indicated interest in examining the staff evaluation process to assure it accurately measures the instructional practices of teachers. An administrator said, "We want excellence in our staff. We look for people with passion." As the district continues to provide staff with professional development opportunities and implements a district wide instructional model, alignment of the evaluation with the expectations of staff is a critical element to ensure all staff are using strategies which will increase student achievement. A district wide evaluation process will generate classroom practices data that can be analyzed for improvement of instruction.

Systematic evaluation leads to improvement in teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

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

The school board and leadership team have a collegial relationship that has led to a stable financial situation, innovative technology improvement,s and a successful bond for facility improvement. Documents and interviews point to a board retreat which clarified the school mission statement--posted prominently throughout the buildings--which serves as the touchstone for district operation. Stakeholders describe board members as having a "vested interest" in educational outcomes because students are family, community members, and potential employees. Administrators respect the business acumen of board members, referring to them as "aggressive and progressive" in moving the district forward. Board members entrust administrators with site-based decision making: "It starts with our leadership: they model excellence." Beyond the accomplishments of

the district, those interviewed consistently return to one common theme: we are family and we care for each other.

A shared vision for excellence is driving the decision making process of the district.

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. 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. The district has benefited from strong community relationships which provide students with educational opportunities, particularly the Pioneer Learning Center which has helped underserved students "find their niche." Stakeholders point to the school environment as one that is student-centric with high expectations, opportunities to participate, and caring and supportive people.

Stakeholders in the district express unified support for "putting students first" in the decision making process.

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.	2.00	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	3.00	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.	2.40	2.80

Conclusion

Administrative leadership and expectations create a culture for high expectations and student learning at Fort Calhoun Secondary. The secondary purpose statement, "Inspiring Courage, Character and Commitment," supports the district mission statement and is displayed throughout the building and included in various stakeholder communications. All seventh graders participate in a leadership course facilitated by the superintendent, secondary principal, and assistant principal. This course supports the secondary Purpose statement and provides an avenue for developing positive, supportive relationships between administrators and students--especially during a transition year.

Administration and staff model high expectations for all learners and provide the necessary support to ensure student success. To ensure all students are successful, the Pioneer Learning Center supports adult transition, credit recovery, and alternative learning programs. The PLC also highlights the commitment to all students and individualized learning for students with wide-ranging needs. The partnership PLC relationship with a neighboring community is an example of Fort Calhoun's ability to build strong connections to stakeholders even outside the district borders.

Learning targets, supporting the implementation of Marzano's Instructional Framework, are visible in classrooms. Instructional rounds are becoming more frequent throughout the building. Staff expressed a desire for more opportunities to experience Instructional rounds--promoting collegiality between staff and best practice shared within the building.

Communication is exceptional at both the secondary 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 electronically and mailed home every quarter. The district website is frequently updated, 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. In addition, both parents and students have access to information through PowerSchool and the online learning management system, Moodle.

During the recent bond for the secondary building upgrade and addition, community forums were held to build support. With the help of volunteers, information about the bond was provided to every home in the district. The leadership of the school board provided a powerful platform for success.

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

Many processes are in place at Fort Calhoun Secondary--providing a clear focus for success. To ensure

continued success as well as challenge the building and district to keep the focus on continued 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 secondary 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 secondary 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 staff changes.

The Improvement Priorities provide a roadmap for continued growth and improvement at Fort Calhoun Secondary 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 Fort Calhoun 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 Fort Calhoun Secondary and 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 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	303.08	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	287.62	274.14
Leadership Capacity	354.55	296.08
Resource Utilization	268.57	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.
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.
Mr. Rick Williams	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 Ohiowa 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.

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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