



External Review Exit Report

Alabaster City Schools
September 20 – 23, 2015

AdvancED is the global leader in providing continuous improvement and accreditation services to over 32,000 institutions serving 20 million students worldwide.

Accreditation

An international protocol for institutions committed to systemic, systematic and sustainable improvement

- Builds capacity of the system and its schools to increase and sustain student learning
- Stimulates and improves effectiveness and efficiency throughout the system

External Review

A diagnostic process to stimulate and guide continuous improvement with a focus on:

- Impact of teaching and learning
- Capacity of leadership
- Use of resources

External Review

Professional judgment by the External Review Team results in:

- Powerful Practices
- Opportunities for Improvement
- Improvement Priority
- Index of Education Quality
- Accreditation Recommendation

External Review

External Review Team agrees that a powerful next step for improvement in support of student and system performance is to . . .

External Review

Align all system processes and programs with the Purpose and Direction statements of the system.

External Review

During the course of the External Review . . .

The Team Interviewed Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Number
Superintendent of Schools	1
School Board Members	5
System and School Administrators	22
Teachers	53
Support Staff	3
Parents and Community/Business Partners	14
Students	57
Total Stakeholders Interviewed	154



Domain

Teaching and Learning Impact

The External Review Team examined:

- Student performance results
- Instructional quality
- Learner and family engagement
- Support services for student learning
- Curriculum quality and efficacy
- College and career readiness data

Findings

Students across the system benefit from the highly developed culture of respect, learning and expectations that has been deliberately established and systemically supported by system leaders and classroom educators.

Parent: "Excellence is the norm."

The Evidence to support our
findings concerning the Teaching and Learning
Impact comes from eleot™ observations
across the system.

The Effective Learning Environments
Observation Tool is focused on what the
students are doing in the classroom.

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The Team conducted 54 eleot™ observations across the system and every school.

54 eleot™ Observations

	Domains	External Review	AEN
1	Equitable Learning Environment		2.69
2	High Expectations Environment		2.81
3	Supportive Learning Environment		3.06
4	Active Learning Environment		2.94
5	Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment		3.07
6	Well-Managed Learning Environment		3.13
7	Digital Learning Environment		1.82

Notes from the eleot™ observations

The purpose of eleot™ is to identify observable evidence of classroom environments that are conducive to learning. The purpose of the tool is to ensure that learners are engaging, acting, reacting and benefiting from various contexts or environments that should be evident in all effective learning settings.

Notes from the eleot™ observations

Examples of high quality classroom instruction exist across the system that serve as models for improvement.

Notes from the eleot™ observations

All students have access to the teacher,
discussions, activities and support for their
learning needs.

Notes from the eleot™ observations

The system should take steps to ensure that all classrooms are rigorous, relevant and highly engaging.

Notes from the eleot™ observations

- Strong, positive interactions between students and teachers
- Students strive to meet the expectations of their teachers
- Differentiation is evident but not observed in every classroom
- Many instances of higher order thinking skills were observed

Notes from the eleot™ observations

- Students generally interact respectfully with school personnel and peers
- Friendly, welcoming, well-maintained learning environments were observed
- Instructional activities are a mix of large group/small group or student centered

Notes from the eleot™ observations

- Some use of exemplars was noted
- Students willingly take risks in offering opinions, suggestions and answers
- High levels of effective student collaboration were observed in many areas
- Creative, efficient and effective classroom management techniques are employed in most classrooms

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eleot™

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Domain

Leadership Capacity

The External Review Team examined:

- Institutional purpose and direction
- Governance and leadership effectiveness
- Stakeholder engagement
- Improvement capacity
- Results

Findings

The system, through a carefully executed process of stakeholder involvement and input, has established a strong culture of high expectations for student success and for the performance of all personnel of the system.

Words from parents: Pride, support . . . "We have competent people running the ship."

Findings

Board training in leadership and governance is ongoing with commitment from the current board.

Findings

The system will benefit from a process that will ensure the alignment of all system programs, initiatives and operations with the Mission, Strategic Plan and guiding statements.

Domain

Resource Utilization

The External Review Team examined:

- Allocation and use of resources
- Equity of resource distribution to need
- Level and sustainability of resources
- Long range capital and resource planning effectiveness

Findings

The system exhibits a commitment to the community and to the high quality education of students through the systematic process to recruit and retain highly qualified staff.

Findings

Resource structure, allocation, and utilization should be guided by the Mission and system Beliefs with a laser focus on supporting and improving student learning.

Findings

Technology integration should be driven by differentiated instruction, application of knowledge, higher order thinking skills and increased student engagement in learning processes and should be tightly aligned with the guiding statements of the system.

Conclusions

Index of Education Quality™ (IEQ™)

- Impact of **teaching and learning** on student performance
- **Capacity of leadership** to guide and ensure effectiveness in carrying out the **strategic direction** of institution
- **Utilization of resources** to meet diverse needs of students and the institution
- IEQ is used as a **tool** for formative analysis and continuous improvement
- IEQ makes **connections** between the conditions, processes, practices and evidence including student performance, that describe system performance

IEQ Results

	External Review IEQ Score	AE Network Average
Overall Score		278.34
Teaching and Learning Impact		268.94
Leadership Capacity		292.64
Resource Utilization		283.86

The purpose of the IEQ score is NOT to rank your institution, but rather to show where you are when we consider over 32,000 institutions in the AdvancED network.

IEQ Results

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IEQ Results

The IEQ results indicate that the school system is performing within acceptable ranges as compared to expected criteria as well as other institutions in the AdvancED network. Therefore . . .

Recommendation

The External Review Team recommends to
the AdvancED Accreditation Commission
that the

Alabaster City School District
be awarded the distinction of accreditation
by AdvancED.

Next Steps:

- Improvement Priorities must be addressed within two years in order to
- continue your journey of improvement with
- deliberate and strategic actions to ensure that every child, *every day is being prepared and achieving success for their future*

Final Thoughts

The External Review Team:

- Appreciates ***your hospitality, support and professionalism. Thank you to the Alabaster City Schools team!***
- Respects and acknowledges the ***efforts to improve the quality of your institution.***
- Congratulates your system and community on ***completing the requirements for AdvancED School System Accreditation.***

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