

**Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
King William County Public Schools**

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US

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Review Dates: 03/21/2010 - 03/24/2010



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), and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

Quality Assurance Review Report

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About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

Background. Founded in 1895, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and Schools (SACS CASI) accredit public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, Latin America, and the Department of Defense Schools worldwide.

In 2006, NCA CASI, SACS CASI, and the research and development arm of the accrediting associations, the National Study of School Evaluation, unified to form AdvancED. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 23,000 schools in 65 countries, serving 15 million students.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI and SACS CASI have defined shared, research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help schools, school districts, and educational service agencies continuously improve.

The Accreditation Process. To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, school districts and their schools must:

- 1) Meet the AdvancED Standards and Policies for Quality School Systems.** School districts demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards and policies which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.
- 2) Engage in continuous improvement.** School districts and their schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose that the school district is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school and district effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).
- 3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** School districts and schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, school districts host an external quality assurance review team once every five years. The team evaluates the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the school district improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school district and a written report detailing the team's required actions. The school district acts on the team's required actions and submits a progress report two years following the review.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI accreditation engages the entire school district community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help school districts and their schools maximize student success and improve organizational effectiveness

Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

Purpose. The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

1. Evaluate the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards and policies..
2. Assess the efficacy of the district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions to improve the district and its schools.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation for review by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

A key aim of the Quality Assurance Review is to verify that the school district is operating with institutional integrity - that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students.

School District Preparation. To prepare for the Quality Assurance Review, the school district and the community complete the AdvancED Standards Assessment Report. The report engages the district in an in-depth self assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. The school district identifies and describes the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each standard. Through this internal review, the school district examines how its systems and processes contribute to student performance and school district effectiveness.

Summary of Team Activities. The Quality Assurance Review Team is led by an AdvancED certified team chair and comprised of professionals from outside the school district. The team reviews the findings of the school district's internal self-assessment, conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders, reviews student performance data and other documentation provided by the school district, and observes practices and daily operations. The team engages in professional deliberations to reach consensus on the school district's adherence to the standards for accreditation. The team provides an oral exit report and prepares a written Quality Assurance Review Team Report designed to help the school district and its schools improve.

The Quality Assurance Review Team Report. Following the visit, the review team completes the Quality Assurance Review report. After review by a nationally-trained reader, the report is submitted to the district. The report contains commendations and required actions for improvement.

Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions. The school district uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school district is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The AdvancED State Office is available to assist the school district in addressing the required actions. Following the Quality Assurance Review Team visit, the school district must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress it has made on the team's required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school district is addressing the required actions.

Accreditation Recommendation. The Quality Assurance Review team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed at the state level and by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school district following action from the commission.

Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the SACS CASI Virginia State Office (SACS-CASI-VA), a division of AdvancED, visited King William County Public Schools on 03/21/2010 - 03/24/2010.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 14 administrators, 64 teachers, 7 support staff, 28 parents and business partners, 29 students, and 4 Board of Education members for a total of 146 stakeholders. In addition to meeting with district personnel and stakeholders, the team visited 4 schools within the school district. During the school visits, team members interviewed school stakeholders, observed classrooms, and reviewed relevant school artifacts. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the district. Specifically, the team examined the district's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED standards focus on systems with a school district and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of the standards lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards. The Quality Assurance Review Team used the AdvancED standards to guide its review of the school district, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school district and its schools function as a whole and embody the practices and characteristics of a quality school district.

Through its examination of the school district's adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review Team prepared reports on each standard, highlighting strengths and suggestions for improvement specific to each standard. These reports can be found following this summary.

The Quality Assurance Review Team also examined the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance. The team reviewed the district's practices and methods to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results. The team's findings in this area can be found following the standard reports.

The team used the standard reports and quality assurance findings to identify common themes, significant accomplishments, and pressing needs facing the district. These became the basis for the overall commendations and required actions that are provided below. The commendations and required actions should serve as the focus for the district as it acts on the team's findings. They represent the areas that the team believes will have the greatest impact in helping the district further its improvement efforts. The standard reports and quality assurance findings can be used to help reinforce and enrich the district's understanding of the commendations and required actions.

Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the King William County Public Schools for the following strengths and accomplishments. While additional strengths are noted in the detailed review of each standard that appears later in this report, the commendations listed below are the strengths that the team believes are most deserving of being highlighted.

- **All instructional staff focus on providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students and prepares them for life after school. Collaboration among teachers allows them to discuss and understand student needs and to provide appropriate instructional strategies.**

Interviews with all stakeholders were consistent in citing the strong sense of community among students, parents and teachers, which enabled them to better understand and meet student needs.

Students experience a high level of engagement and satisfaction with classes, teachers and schools.

- **King William Public Schools maintain a focus on the use of data and data analysis to improve operations and instruction in the division.**

Interviews with Central Office and school-based staff showed a widespread understanding of data and its use for continuous improvement. Artifacts also included formal reports indicating the use and analysis of data for decision-making.

This use of data for decision making allows the division to respond quickly and appropriately to academic student needs and to operational issues.

- **The School Board and division administration work cooperatively to provide the best education possible to students in the division.**

Interviews with division staff and School Board members revealed an open relationship, sharing of data and information, and cooperative actions.

This relationship has led to the best use of resources for student education in challenging budget times.

- **The division communicates well with its stakeholders and the community, building strong positive relationships.**

Parents, community members and School Board Members report that they receive regular reports of data from the division, ranging from individual student progress, to implementation of new programs, to student performance data. Parents and community members have the opportunity to participate on a myriad of advisory boards where their input is valued by the division staff.

Parents and the community at large support the division and believe that the schools are providing an appropriate, rigorous education for the children of the county.

Required Actions

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following required actions

for improvement. The team focused its required actions on those areas that, if addressed, will have the greatest impact on improving student performance and overall effectiveness of the school district. The King William County Public Schools will be held accountable for making progress on each of the required actions noted in this section. Following this review, the school district will be asked to submit a progress report on these required actions. The district should refer to the detail provided in the standard reports for guidance and greater depth on the required actions.

- **Focus the School Improvement Plan (SIP) process on improvement strategies rather than list all strategies in use at the school.**

Current SIPs do not highlight the key strategies that will make a difference this academic year. SIPs are a key component of the AdvancED district accreditation process and can provide a focus for the staff, parents and students of a school to implement improvement strategies.

In order for this to occur, the SIP must focus more narrowly and be clearly central to the improvement process with interim monitoring of the strategies to ensure they are enabling the school to meet its goals.

Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools: The team reviewed the district's adherence to each of the AdvancED standards. The findings from this review are provided in the next section of this report.

Next Steps

The school district should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the commendations section to maximize their impact on the school district.
3. Develop action plans to address the required actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the required actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school district's efforts to improve student performance and district effectiveness.
5. Two years following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. Lack of progress can result in a change in accreditation status.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Resources

AdvancED offers a range of resources to support your school district as it acts on the findings in this report. The AdvancED Resource Network, available at www.advanc-ed.org/resourcenetwork, provides an online network of peer-to-peer practices, best practices, and resources and tools designed to help school districts and their schools with continuous improvement.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review Team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for review and action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers

accreditation and communicates it to the school district. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school district should celebrate its achievement with the community. Flags, door decals, diploma seals, and other related items can be ordered from the website to help you share your accomplishment with your community.

Summary

The accreditation process engages the school district, its schools, and community in an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. The next steps in this journey are to build on the commendations and address the required actions noted in this report. Doing so will enable the school district to advance in its quest for excellence and deepen the fulfillment of its mission for all students.

Standards for Accreditation

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the district demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

The Quality Assurance Review Team divided into standard teams to review each standard and prepare a standards report summarizing the team's findings. These standard reports, along with the quality assurance findings that follow these reports, provided the basis for the team's identification of over-arching commendations and required actions presented earlier in this report. The reports submitted by each team are provided on the following pages for the district's review and use. Each report reflects its respective team's unique voice, perspective, and deliberations. The reports can be used to help enrich and deepen the district's understanding of the overall commendations and required actions.

Standard 1. Vision & Purpose

Standard: The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system.

Description:

The King William County Public Schools (KWPCS) has committed to a vision and purpose that clearly sets expectations for student learning. Administrators worked with School Board members' input and review to develop a vision and mission that has been clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Stakeholders can easily recall and articulate the vision. The mission along with the goals and objectives are posted in schools and offices for all to see. The QAR Team heard stakeholders describe the vision in their own words, but clearly they understood the direction of the KWPCS.

Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team interviews with Central Office support staff indicated that the mission and vision permeate all areas of the division operations. For example, facilities and financial staff indicated that they made decisions based on instructional needs of the students and teachers. In addition, instructional staff kept the academic needs of all their students in mind as they made decisions about instruction.

The QAR team found many artifacts supporting the maintenance of the division profile. The Academic Scorecards were posted and visible in the district conference room and in each school. School and Department Improvement Plans identified current status and set goals based on the district vision.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- All stakeholders can clearly articulate the KWPCS vision.
- The vision guides the school and division improvement plans.
- All organizational components of the school division clearly reflect the vision.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Publicize the vision among the wider community.

Finding: Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the King William County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Vision & Purpose" standard.

Standard 2. Governance & Leadership

Standard: The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.

Description:

Division level leadership and School Board members have demonstrated a positive working relationship that enhances the implementation and development of school improvement initiatives and programs. In interviews, School Board members clearly stated that they understood the School Board's role as a policy role. They attend state-provided training for school board members in order to ensure all Board members understand their responsibilities. They have worked to build good relationships with the Board of Supervisors in order to assure adequate funding for the school division.

A collaborative approach exists among district leaders, school-based administrators, and individual school leadership teams. The organizational chart identifies each Central Office administrator's roles and responsibilities for maximum organizational performance. Stakeholders can participate in leadership opportunities through advisory boards. They also have easy access to school leaders by telephone, email and in the schools.

The QAR Team found that the board and division leadership value innovation and place a emphasis on data analysis to determine instructional strengths and weaknesses.

The QAR team found that in difficult budgetary times, the board and division leadership placed a priority on protecting programs, people, and resources directly linked to the classroom and student achievement.

The QAR team further observed that the school division establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school division.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- A positive working relationship exists between board and division leadership.
- School Board and division leadership make sound and prudent budgetary decisions that focus on instructional priorities.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Develop effective strategies to communicate facility improvement needs to the Board of Supervisors.

Finding: Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the King William County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Governance & Leadership" standard.

Standard 3. Teaching & Learning

Standard: The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Description:

The division establishes a well defined curriculum based on SOL objectives and the Curriculum Framework as provided by the state. The division maintains a yearly cycle which involves teachers and Central office staff in the development and review of county pacing guides and common assessments. Tools are in place to ensure that the assessments are easily accessible for data disaggregation by classroom teachers, administrators, and support personnel. The QAR team observed the Academic Scorecard, which reports assessment and other data at the end of nine, eighteen, and twenty-seven weeks.

There is a PK-12 focus on meeting the needs of students who require additional time or other supports to learn the curriculum. All schools have a Student Teacher Assistance Team which identifies students who may qualify for special education services. The elementary schools have extended the learning day to include an intervention and enrichment period. Professional Learning Communities also examine student performance data to find ways to provide for the learning needs of all students. Because of data indicating discrepancies in achievement by gender, the division instituted gender based classes and is currently evaluating student progress in these classes through benchmark data.

Meeting the needs of all students is a major focus. The division places a strong emphasis on differentiated instruction and support of all learners. The Interactive Achievement data system has provided test banks, assessments and reports on student performance. Teachers use these formative assessment reports to change instruction to meet student needs.

The QAR team found in interviews and in its artifact review an emphasis on rigor and on providing opportunities for students who excel. Programs at the high school level include Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment courses with Richmond Technical Center, Virtual Virginia courses, and attendance at the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School, among others. Elementary and middle schools have a strong Talented and Gifted Program for students, and provide other enrichment activities. Also at the elementary level, teachers are seeking such practices as literature circles to enhance higher order thinking skills.

In addition, the division provides relevant professional development opportunities for teachers at the division level and also allows those decisions to be made at the school level. Teachers use data from benchmark assessments to determine target areas for remediation and to tier interventions. The school division applied for and received a grant to implement the Content Literacy Continuum (CLC) to address adolescent literacy at the middle and high school. The grant also provides professional development for teachers this year, so that they will be prepared when the project begins in 2010-11.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The division has provided teachers with extensive training for use and integration of technology.
- There has been a strong and sustained focus on implementing Professional Learning Communities.
- The elementary schools have lengthened the instructional day to better meet student academic needs.
- "Transition" classes in elementary schools provide additional daily academic support in reading

and math for students who are below grade level with the goal of accelerating their learning to reach grade level achievement.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Research instructional models proven to increase student mathematics performance at the middle school level.
- Emphasize vertical planning at transition grade levels: grades 2 and 3; grades 5 and 6; and grades 8 and 9.
- Implement fully the Professional Learning Communities concept at all levels with additional support at the high school level.
- Increase rigor in high school courses, such as the addition of advanced computer science classes.
- Research strategies to find and provide appropriate resources to support Hamilton Holmes Middle School in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress benchmarks.

Finding: Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the King William County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Teaching & Learning" standard.

Standard 4. Documenting & Using Results

Standard: The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and system effectiveness.

Description:

The QAR team found evidence in artifacts of the school division's strong commitment to data collection and data analysis for the improvement of instruction.

The state of Virginia provides standardized test results (SOL Test), and districts are responsible for analysis and use of results. Teachers and administrators effectively use data systems provided by the school division to analyze SOL Test data, identify gaps, and meet in Professional Learning Communities to determine how best to address these. The Interactive Assessment program, which KWCPSS uses for building, administering and analyzing benchmark and other interim assessments provides an easy means for teachers and administrators to determine progress. Overall student progress appears in the Academic Scorecards, and teachers can also access individual student information in order to tailor instruction to student needs. In addition, teacher interviews indicated the daily use of multiple data sources to identify student needs and provide instruction tailored to the individual student.

Remediation plans for each school indicated item analysis and analysis of subgroup performance on the benchmark tests, and defined strategies to close gaps in student learning. Parents with internet access can track their child's grades through the division's parent portal, and teachers regularly communicated with all parents concerning student progress.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The collection, analysis, and use of data for making decisions infuses all levels and departments of the division.
- There is a division-wide focus on using data results to make decisions in all areas, instructional and

operational.

- The division uses a wide variety of formal and informal assessment tools to gauge student progress.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Compare student performance and other data with other divisions similar in size and demographics to gain perspective on King William Public Schools performance and progress as required in the AdvancED standards.
- Provide teachers with additional and ongoing professional development in the analysis and use of data.

Finding: Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the King William County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Documenting & Using Results" standard.

Standard 5. Resource & Support Systems

Standard: The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Description:

The division shows a strong commitment to directing available resources toward uses which support the stated mission and vision. Through appropriate recruitment and retention measures, the division has secured and retained a highly qualified staff to provide appropriate instruction. The division provides a strong orientation and mentoring program for new staff.

Interviews with School Board members and division staff showed compelling evidence to indicate sound financial planning in the division. Several years ago, there were accounting irregularities in the division, and the School Board has worked with the division administration to ensure this situation cannot happen again. Accounting practices and personnel have changed to ensure proper procedures.

The School Board's budget planning process maintains a focus on their stated vision. This obvious alignment has resulted in maximizing the impact of limited funding. Despite the present economic downturn, the School Board is able to access reserve funds which had been set aside for just such circumstances.

Transportation, facilities, technology and child nutrition services provide strong support to the students and teachers in KWCPs. All administrators attend instructional meetings so that they can be aware of all instructional initiatives in KWCPs. Those working in support services are central to instruction. They clearly understand the priority of instruction and their key role in supporting it.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- There is strong evidence that long-range prudent financial planning, aligned with instructional priorities, has resulted in maximizing the impact of available funding.
- Support services operate in a highly efficient manner, assuring a safe, orderly, and healthy environment for all members of the school community.
- The division has worked with the local telecommunication industry to improve bandwidth for its

students and staff. Division technology staff provide excellent technical and instructional support for the schools and the division.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Seek funding sources for a regional Career Technical Education Center.

Finding: Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the King William County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Resource & Support Systems" standard.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications & Relationships

Standard: The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Description:

QAR team interviews with School Board members indicated that the school division communicates regularly with the School Board about new initiatives, shares school improvement plans, and reviews formative and summative assessment data.

The school division utilizes multiple avenues to communicate with their stakeholders and constantly publishes information for the public. The KSCPS Instructional Technology Resource Specialist maintains a comprehensive website for the division with numerous reports, school events, calendars, school report cards and links to other educational information. The school division uses a new communication tool, School Messenger, to contact and apprise parents of alerts, school events, and other pertinent messages. Information is published on a regular basis in the community papers such as 360 view, Country Courier and Tidewater Review. PowerSchool is a relatively new student information system that allows parents access to students' grades, missed assignments, and report cards. Parents can access this information anytime.

The school division actively seeks participation and communication from parents. It offers many opportunities for parents to serve on advisory committees which provide avenues for parents and community members to be involved and share in the decision making.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The school division uses multiple methods to communicate with stakeholders, including newspapers, PowerSchool, and the KWCPs webpage.
- Parents indicated that they are welcomed in schools and that their input is valued.
- Teachers communicate detailed information about students regularly with their parents.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Better communicate the purpose and structure of the intervention and enrichment time to parents at the elementary level.

Finding: Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the King William County Public Schools has met the

accreditation requirements for the "Stakeholder Communications & Relationships" standard.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Standard: The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

Description:

King William County Public Schools shows a commitment to Continuous Improvement in its use of data and data analysis to improve student performance. The Professional Learning Communities process in all schools requires teachers to work in teams to gather and analyze student academic performance data and to constantly adjust instruction to meet individual needs. Teachers use informal and formal frequent assessments, along with the benchmarks, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), Gates MacGinitie, among others.

The Central Office administrative team developed an Academic Review process that uses classroom observations to report to teachers and administrators the state of their instructional practices. This quantitative report allows teachers and administrators to more easily understand what is actually being practiced in the classroom.

The division identifies professional development priorities through surveys, data analysis and professional discussions, and provides professional development at the division level for those priorities. In addition, building principals have their own professional development funds to meet their staff's identified needs.

School Improvement Plans are in place according to the division's template. These plans list all current instructional practices and do not prioritize those improvement strategies that are in the process of being implemented to make positive change in the district. The improvement strategies could provide a focus for parents, teachers, students and the entire school community as the school seeks excellence. Goals are set in the current School Improvement Plans. Formal monitoring of the progress toward those goals at benchmark dates could help schools assess their progress toward their goals during the school year.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Many open forums for discussion of data and continuous improvement exist throughout the division, including Professional Learning Communities, School Board meetings, Assistant Superintendent meetings, and various advisory board meetings.
- Professional Learning Communities have embraced data and data analysis as a means to identifying academic problems and adjusting instruction to meet individual student needs.
- The internal Academic Review process provides an objective lens through which to evaluate the level of classroom instruction.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Revise the School Improvement Plan process to highlight new improvement strategies currently implemented as well as all the strategies in use at the school.

Finding: Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the King William County Public Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the "Commitment to Continuous Improvement" standard.

Quality Assurance Findings

The Quality Assurance Review Team examined the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance. The team reviewed the district's practices and methods to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results. The team provides the following findings in this area.

Description

KWCPS have clearly structured processes and responsibilities throughout all instructional and operational areas. The team reviewed artifacts and conducted interviews with a wide variety of employees within the division that indicated that the plans and processes were not just on paper, but were part of day-to-day practices.

Central Office support staff discussed how they track work orders, maximize energy efficiency, route buses, and schedule maintenance (among other tasks) using data to ensure best use of time and money and support of the instructional programs. The Professional Learning Communities initiative provides a forum and process for on-going monitoring of instructional practices.

The division communicates results appropriately according to the audience. In interviews, School Board members said that they not only received results from assessments (both formative and summative), discipline and attendance data, but also information on the committees, meetings and processes that the division utilizes to interpret and make decisions regarding the data. Parents spoke highly of the individual student data available to them concerning their students. The new Power School Parent Portal gives them immediate access to student information, and they also value the direct teacher communication they receive via e-mail, phone calls, student agendas, and Friday or Tuesday folders.

Strengths

- Administrators from Central Office are in the schools on a regular basis, and are able to gauge school climate, student and teacher relationships, student engagement, and student behavior. This direct observation enriches the picture they have through the written or online artifacts.

Opportunities

- Develop understanding of the different uses of operational plans (strategies that are part of the school's way of doing things) and improvement plans (new strategies that will change academic outcomes).

Conclusion

The commendations and required actions in this report are designed to focus the school district on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student performance and system effectiveness. While powerful in potential, the commendations and required actions only have meaning when acted upon by the school district and its schools. The strength of this report lies in the school district's commitment to using the findings to continuously improve. The key is action. The school district is encouraged to use the report as a call to action, a tool to sustain momentum in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The team identified required actions for improvement that the school district will need to address. Following this review, the school district will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the district leadership, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for hosting the review team. The team wishes the district and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS-CASI-VA accreditation with AdvancED.

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Ms. Dorothy Lodge, Chair (Gaston County School System)
- Dr. Regina Yitbarek, Vice Chair (Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools)
- Dr. J. Bryan Martin, Team Member (Johnston County Schools)
- Dr. Jeff Comer, Team Member (Norton City Schools)
- Ms. LuAnne Unruh, Team Member (Louisa County Public Schools)

AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems

The AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. As school districts reach higher levels of implementation of the standards, they will have a greater capacity to support ever-increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. Each of the seven standards listed below has corresponding indicators and impact statements which can be accessed at www.advanc-ed.org.

Vision and Purpose

The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system.

Governance and Leadership

The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.

Teaching and Learning

The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Documenting and Using Results

The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and system effectiveness.

Resource and Support Systems

The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.