



# **Monitoring Visit Report**

**Clayton County Public Schools  
1058 Fifth Avenue  
Jonesboro, Georgia 30236**

**April 14-16, 2010**

# About AdvancED and NCA CASI /SACS CASI

## Background

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

## The Accreditation Process

To earn and maintain accreditation, an institution must:

- 1. Meet the AdvancED Standards and accreditation policies.**

Institutions demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED Standards and accreditation policies, which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for educational institutions to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

- 2. Engage in continuous improvement.**

Institutions implement a process of continuous improvement focused on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

- 3. Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.**

Institutions engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, institutions host an external Quality Assurance Review Team once every five years. The Team evaluates the institution's adherence to the AdvancED Standards and accreditation policies, assesses the efficacy of the institution's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the institution improve. The institution acts on the team's required actions and submits an Accreditation Progress Report at prescribed intervals following the Quality Assurance Review. Monitoring visits may be conducted during this time to ensure that the institution is making progress toward the required actions.

## Special Reviews

At any point, a Special Review may be conducted in response to complaints or information about the institution and/or its system (system, board, or corporation) to determine adherence to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and policies. The institution and/or its system must respond to the required actions of the Special Review Team. Monitoring Teams may be sent to the institution and/or its system at regular intervals to ensure that progress is being made toward the Special Review Team's required actions. Both Special Review Teams and Monitoring Teams are empowered to make accreditation recommendations based upon evidence obtained during said visit.

## A Process of Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED accreditation process engages the institution in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help institutions be the best they can be on behalf of the students they serve.

# Monitoring Visit Report

## Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of the Monitoring Team during its Monitoring Visit held on April 14-16, 2010, to Clayton County Public Schools. The purpose of the Monitoring Visit is to review the institution's progress toward addressing issues raised in the initial Special Review held January 16-17, 2008, the nine mandates from the Special Review held August 14-15, 2008, and the four recommendations added by the Special Review held April 13-15, 2009. This report also focuses on the progress made since the initial Monitoring Visit held October 8-9, 2009.

## Activities of the Monitoring Team

In preparation for the monitoring visit, the Monitoring Team reviewed the institution's progress report and related documentation. Once on-site, the team engaged in the following activities:

- Meetings with the institution head and leadership team
- Interviews with 58 stakeholders representing the board members, superintendent, superintendent's cabinet, executive directors, directors, principals, parents/business/community stakeholders, board attorney, and board parliamentarian
- Artifact review
- Observations of board meetings and work sessions through video recordings
- Team deliberations and report preparation

The Monitoring Team used the findings from these activities and evidence reviewed to assess the progress the institution has made toward addressing the mandates and recommendations made by the previous Special Review Teams.

## Findings

The Monitoring Team's findings are organized by each of the mandates and recommendations made by the Special Review Teams. For each mandate and recommendation, the Monitoring Team provides a progress status rating, summary of findings, and directives to guide next steps.

### **MANDATE 1: ESTABLISH A GOVERNING BOARD THAT IS CAPABLE OF FULFILLING ITS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.**

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this mandate.

	<b>Completed</b> - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the mandate.
X	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the mandate.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

The Clayton County Board of Education has made significant progress toward establishing and maintaining a board capable of fulfilling its roles and responsibilities. In the past year, this new board has pursued professional development in the areas of conflict resolution, effective boardsmanship, parliamentary procedure, and communication. They have engaged the community in a comprehensive, collaborative strategic planning process, beginning with the revision of the vision and mission to guide their work. The superintendent has presented to the board operational protocols, professional development topics, and systematic plans to meet the mandates and recommendations issued by the SACS CASI Special Review Teams, and the board has complied with these documents. The vast majority of improvement efforts have originated with the superintendent and his staff. While it is admirable that the board has agreed to these actions and protocols, the leadership and initiative for improvement needs to shift to the board itself.

Of note is the professional development program that engages the majority of the board members. The board has agreed to monthly retreats for the purpose of professional development. Currently board members are involved in their second professional book study, focusing on topics of conflict resolution and characteristics of effective organizations. Most of the board members reported that they are benefiting from the study, but not all members are reading the materials and actively participating in the professional growth activities. The board is developing a self-evaluation tool for each member to guide future growth and determine avenues for improvement.

Effective and efficient board meetings were observed by the Monitoring Team through video archives. The parliamentarian enforces protocols to ensure efficient and appropriate operation of the board. Board members exhibit appropriate communication practices, and the board chair effectively maintains focus on the agenda and matters of the board.

The Clayton County Board of Education has demonstrated that the majority of its members are capable of fulfilling its roles and responsibilities. The Monitoring Team is aware that no board selected by the citizens reflective of the diversity in the community and varying opinions and perspectives can be expected to always present a unified position on all issues. The goal is to avoid significant tension and conflict among its members. The current board of education members are to be commended for their focus and dedication on becoming effective policy makers. There is evidence that the majority of the board members diligently seek a model school system.

**Directives:**

- Establish a timeline for professional development for the board and system leadership and facilitate activities to ensure continued professional growth.
- Complete the board self-evaluation process and implement a plan to use the resulting data to guide professional growth of the board.
- Complete the superintendent evaluation process.

**Mandate 2:** REMOVE THE INFLUENCE OF OUTSIDE GROUPS/INDIVIDUALS THAT ARE DISRUPTIVE TO THE WORK OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

**PROGRESS STATUS:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this mandate.

	<b>Completed</b> - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the mandate.
X	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the mandate.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

All current Clayton County Board of Education members have signed affidavits of agreement to the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy. Board policies state that board of education members may not be an officer or hold a leadership position in a professional organization or association that compromises their role on the board of education. Due to concerns of board members, the Clayton County Legislative Delegation revised and gained approval by the Georgia Legislature for a bill improving the ability of the Ethics Commission to deal with issues related to the ethical conduct of members of the board of education.

As a result of these actions, there are no current members of the board of education holding offices or leadership positions in organizations or associations that compromise the role of a board member. Interviews with stakeholders and review of artifacts confirmed that all board members have signed affidavits of assurance for the Code of Ethics and the Conflict of Interest protocols and policy. Board minutes and interviews with stakeholders indicate there has been a decrease in disruptive outside political influences on the board of education, although many stakeholders expressed concerns that upcoming board elections may see those disruptions increase. The board chairman has demonstrated effective adherence to parliamentary procedures and established protocols to keep board members on task. Also, board members are monitoring each other to ensure that the outside influences do not adversely affect the operations of the board meetings.

While evidence supports a more aligned vision and purpose among the board members, personal agendas and loyalty to individual constituents rather than the system as a whole are still evident among some board members. These elements detract from the board’s function of serving the entire system as a unified governing board. The Monitoring Team recognizes that individual personalities and interests contribute to a well-rounded board of education; however, there must be alignment of purpose and effective organizational operations to serve the entire system rather than individual entities within the system.

**Directives:**

- Complete the board self-evaluation process and use the resulting data to guide the professional growth activities of the board.
- Expand practices that evaluate the board’s effectiveness as a whole, through stakeholder surveys and board/system leadership evaluation instruments.
- Establish practices to monitor and ensure fidelity to conflict of interest protocols.

**MANDATE 3:** ENACT AND COMMIT TO AN ETHICS POLICY THAT GOVERNS THE ACTIONS AND WORK OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND STAFF INCLUDING APPROPRIATE STEPS WHEN SAID POLICY IS VIOLATED.

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this mandate.

X	<b>Completed</b> - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the mandate.
	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the mandate.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

In February 2010, the board began discussion of a new policy, BBBA – Board Operations-Board Member Duties, which delineates responsibilities and decorum for the board including corrective actions to be taken if the policy is not followed. After much discussion and deliberation, the board passed this policy at its April 2010 meeting. Through interviews it was evident that not all board members are in agreement with the policy and its enforcement.

At the beginning of each board meeting and work session, the chair reads an ethics statement and allows opportunity for any board member with conflicts or issues on the agenda to abstain and reflect his or her reason for abstention. A vote is taken after this reading to ensure that every member is in agreement with the statements outlined in the policy. This process was observed by the Monitoring Team through review of video archives of several board meetings and work sessions.

The staff contract for Clayton County Public Schools employees now includes a statement of adherence to the Ethics Policy and consequences of violations of that policy. The code of ethics statement is signed annually by each employee of the system. The system has also taken additional steps by initiating an internal plan for monitoring and supervising schools for compliance with standards in administering standardized tests.

The enforcement of the Ethics Policy through the Ethics Commission resulted in one board member being charged with violations. While the appeal of that legal case was denied by the Superior Court Judge of Clayton County, it is currently under another appeal to the Georgia Supreme Court.

As a result of these actions the board of education has made great strides in self-monitoring and board decorum. Most board members have consistently demonstrated commitment to ethical actions. Employees have agreed to work in an ethical manner and understand the consequences of violations.

**Directives:**

- Continue to monitor the ethics policy for compliance.
- Complete the board self evaluation scheduled for May 2010 and use the resulting data to develop professional growth activities on indicated topics.

**MANDATE 4:** IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF BOARD POLICIES THAT INCLUDES TRAINING FOR BOARD MEMBERS ON THE PURPOSE AND EXPECTATIONS OF SAID POLICIES.

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this mandate.

	<b>Completed</b> - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the mandate.
X	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the mandate.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

Beginning in October 2009, documented agendas reflect a process for the systematic review and revision of the board’s policy manual. Board work sessions and retreats have time allocated for the review of policies. The revisions are then brought to regular board meetings for approval. Templates from the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) provide a foundation for this work. The board attorney is leading the policy revision effort.

A timeline for policy review and revisions has been presented and passed by the board. This timeline indicates that public input will be available in order that the work in progress continues. As policies are up for review, principals and stakeholders are notified. Public input can be submitted through e-mails and web-based processes. Current policies are available online. The approved schedule for policy review indicates a thorough revision of all current policies will be completed by December 2010. At the time of the Monitoring Visit, the revision of Section J: Student Policies had been completed and Section G: Personnel was in the process of revision.

Administrative Rules, or operating procedures, are being revised or created as policies are updated. Revised policies are posted on the system’s website and shared with principals and the community through monthly principals meetings, cluster meetings, and parent activities.

**Directives:**

- Implement practices to ensure that the system remains on schedule to review and revise all board policies by December 2010.
- Develop a timeline for the development or revision of Administrative Rules to support implementation of the revised policies.
- Establish procedures to ensure comprehensive communication of policy revisions to internal and external stakeholders.

**MANDATE 5: CONDUCT A FULL, FORENSIC AUDIT OF FINANCIALS BY AN INDEPENDENT, CERTIFIED ACCOUNTING FIRM AND TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO ADDRESS THE FINDINGS OF SUCH AN AUDIT.**

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this mandate.

X	<b>Completed</b> - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the mandate.
	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the mandate.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

A complete forensic audit was conducted in 2008-2009 by an independent certified accounting firm. This audit resulted in the development of fiscal goals for improvement and timelines for deployment of these goals. The fiscal audit extended to transportation and maintenance departments. Global Positioning Systems (GPS) have been installed on all buses and maintenance vehicles to reduce mileage and stage vehicles in regions. The system has installed a National Automotive Parts Association part inventory control system, which has resulted in savings of one million dollars in inventory, salary, benefits, and labor hours as well as eliminating accounting errors. The maintenance department has implemented new inventory procedures and a new work order system to increase efficiency of operation.

In addition to these audits, through the superintendent’s association with the Broad Center for the Management of School Systems, the Broad Center provided its services to conduct communication, instructional, and operational audits. These reports were shared with the board and system leadership in September, October, and November of 2009, leading to improvement plans and revised processes in each of the three areas. The Monitoring Team reviewed these reports and the resulting action plans.

The Foods and Nutrition Department has recently obtained new software to assist with inventory control and food orders. The system staff is working collaboratively to ensure this process is implemented with fidelity.

**Directives:**

- Establish procedures to continue monitoring fiscal, operational, and organizational procedures for efficiency and accuracy.
- Complete implementation of the new software in the Foods and Nutrition Department for efficiency.
- Continue with annual audits and implement plans to address all findings.

**MANDATE 6:** CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE AUDIT OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE RECORDS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT ATTENDANCE RECORDS ARE ACCURATE AND MEET LEGAL REQUIREMENTS.

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this mandate.

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	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the mandate.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

A comprehensive audit of school attendance records resulted in retraining and support for school attendance personnel and implementation of a random sampling monitoring system. Incentives were developed to recognize schools with no accounting errors and schools with increased attendance.

While average daily attendance at both elementary and high school levels has remained constant and average daily attendance at the middle school level has slightly increased, the evidence reveals that accuracy in attendance reporting has markedly increased. A keen awareness of attention to detail and monitoring of that accuracy have resulted in fewer errors at all levels in the system.

**Directives:**

- Implement procedures to train and update appropriate personnel.
- Continue monitoring for accuracy of attendance reporting.

**MANDATE 7:** ENSURE THAT EACH MEMBER OF THE BOARD IS A LEGAL RESIDENT OF THE COUNTY AND IS ELIGIBLE TO HOLD THE ELECTED SEAT ON THE BOARD.

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this mandate.

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	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the mandate.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

After a review of the evidence and artifacts, which included residency verification affidavits, the Georgia Election Code for school board members, a map of Clayton County marked with board of education members' residences, a pictorial directory of its members, and board of education policy ABCB – School Board Members, it was determined that this mandate has been completed.

**Directives:**

- Maintain a clear review of residency of existing and new board members annually to ensure compliance.



**MANDATE 8:** SECURE THE SERVICES OF OUTSIDE CONSULTANT(S) WITH EXPERTISE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION, GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS.

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing the mandate.

X	<b>Completed</b> - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the mandate.
	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the mandate.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

The superintendent and his senior staff, with some input from the board of education members, have developed a professional development model whose initial modules focus on conflict resolution. The agenda of the February retreat clearly allocates significant time for a presentation by the board attorney on conflict management techniques. Other agendas reviewed verified this as a repeated topic in work sessions and retreats.

The board has agreed to monthly retreats to address professional growth. There does not appear to be a clear plan for the professional development of the board; rather, topics and content are suggested by the superintendent and agreed upon by the majority of the board. Collectively, the board members and system leadership have read and discussed The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: a Leadership Fable, which deals with organizational effectiveness and conflict resolution. A second book, Silos, Politics, and Turf Wars: A Leadership Fable about Destroying the Barriers that Turn Colleagues into Competitors is currently under review. Reflections and sessions to discuss materials in the books are led by the superintendent during the board’s monthly retreats. Interviews with board members revealed that a few board members are not reading the materials and do not agree with the direction of the professional growth activities. Most of the board members, however, are participating fully and express satisfaction with the results of the activities.

In addition to these internally led processes, the board has benefited from outside consultants and services from the Georgia School Boards Association, the National School Boards Association, the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement, the Archway Project, and the National Alliance of Black School Educators. Much of the work of the consultants has focused on conflict resolution and effective organizational operation.

**Directives:**

- Complete the board self evaluation and use the resulting data to develop a professional growth plan for the board, the superintendent, and the system leadership. Include a specific timeline for implementation of the sessions.
- Monitor participation in professional growth opportunities for the board to ensure total commitment and engagement.

**MANDATE 9:** APPOINT A PERMANENT SUPERINTENDENT WITH THE EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE TO LEAD THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND ESTABLISH THE PROPER CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVENESS.

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this mandate.

X	<b>Completed</b> - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the mandate.
	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the mandate.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

A new superintendent of Clayton County Public Schools was appointed and under contract effective July 1, 2009 after an extensive national search was led by the board attorney and conducted by the board of education. The superintendent established and presented to the board a plan for his “First 90 Days” to direct his initial work as superintendent. In December of 2009, the superintendent reported the results of his observations and work through the First 90 Days Plan and established *Three Phases* to build on the First 90 Days Plan and to direct his work in the future. The First 90 Days Plan, as well as the proposed Phases I, II, and III, are clear indications of the superintendent’s experience and expertise to lead Clayton County Public Schools.

For several months, the board of education worked collaboratively with the superintendent to establish goals for his evaluation. They also established criteria to determine whether the superintendent will receive incentive bonuses that were built into his contract.

Under the direction of the superintendent, a committee of stakeholders and school system personnel reviewed the previous improvement plans, consolidated ideas, and wrote a new strategic plan. The vision, mission, and goals of that plan now provide the basis for all decisions in the school system.

As a result of these actions, criteria have been established for the annual evaluation of the superintendent (per his contract) and criteria have been established for awarding incentive bonuses to the superintendent (per his contract). The superintendent reported to the board progress on his “First 90 Days” entry plan, including the next action steps to be taken. Under the superintendent’s direction and with input from all stakeholder groups, the school system has reviewed, revised, and adopted its vision and mission statements as well as completed a comprehensive strategic plan. The superintendent updated the organization chart and established a Complaint Resolution Process. The superintendent has also begun to establish a new culture for the school system, which is laying a foundation for mutual trust.

**Directives:**

- Complete the superintendent’s evaluation by the board.

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** INITIATE A COMPREHENSIVE, COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS TO REVIEW AND REVISE ACCORDINGLY THE VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES OF THE CLAYTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this recommendation.

X	<b>Completed</b> - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the recommendation.
	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the recommendation.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

The system had begun a strategic planning process that included revision of the vision, mission, and beliefs prior to the tenure of the current superintendent. Following his hire, the strategic planning process was modified to honor the previous work but to involve greater stakeholder participation and focus on the ideals and imperatives of the new system leadership. Stakeholder interviews reflected extensive participation in the revision and crafting of the vision, mission, and beliefs, with over 200 individuals participating in the meetings. Additionally, web-based input was received and considered in the development of these guiding principles. Interviews and documents reflect that stakeholders can clearly articulate the vision and purpose of the system and that these statements firmly guide the

work of the system. Review of video archives of board meetings and work sessions provide evidence that the vision and mission are central to the work of the board. The draft of the system’s strategic plan reflects a clear alignment with the vision and mission of the system, and individual school improvement plans are being aligned to the system’s strategic plan through the new e-board electronic platform.

**Directives:**

- Establish a process to regularly review the vision, mission, and belief statements and revise as necessary to appropriately reflect and guide the work of the system.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** IMPLEMENT IMMEDIATELY A SYSTEMIC AND COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AT THE SYSTEM AND SCHOOL LEVELS THAT INVITES BROAD AND MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT FROM ALL MAJOR STAKEHOLDER GROUPS AND REFOCUSSES THE SYSTEM’S ENERGIES ON IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

**PROGRESS STATUS:** PLEASE INDICATE THE PROGRESS THE INSTITUTION HAS MADE TOWARD ADDRESSING THIS RECOMMENDATION.

X	<b>Completed</b> - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the recommendation.
	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the recommendation.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

During the March 22, 2010 board meeting, an overview of the strategic plan was presented to the board of education. The plan involves six goal areas, the first being academic achievement. Each of the other goal areas are clearly aligned with student achievement, focusing on safe, orderly, and caring learning environments; engagement of all stakeholders; effective communication; organizational processes; and highly qualified and effective staff. Each goal area is supported by performance objectives, initiatives, and detailed action steps. The strategic plan is supported by a Balanced Scorecard which includes data points and goals for each measurable initiative in the strategic plan. The strategic plan covers the time period of 2010-2014, with fluid updates to the plan making it a living document to guide the work of the system. The plan is currently in internal processing to align departmental goals and objectives with system goals. Presentation of the final strategic plan to the public is planned for September 2010.

School alignment with the system’s strategic plan was verified through interviews with school principals and district staff. All principals have available the system goals and objectives, to which they are aligning their school improvement plans. The system intends to use the electronic capabilities of eBoard to facilitate this alignment. Training for principals on this platform and effective processes for alignment is scheduled during the Leadership Institute in June.

Stakeholder involvement in the development of the strategic plan was extensive. Parents and community stakeholders, as well as school and system personnel, indicated in interviews with the Monitoring Team that they had meaningful involvement and made significant contributions to the development of the strategic plan. Over 200 stakeholders from the system, community, businesses, faith-based organizations, civic community, and other constituencies participated in meetings to establish the major goals for system improvement. Additional community input was solicited through the system’s website, and evidence supports significant input through this venue. The system leadership then refined the agreed-upon goals and developed performance objectives, initiatives, and action steps. Another process to support the work of the strategic plan is the development of the Academic Pathways,

which are clearly aligned to the strategic plan and provide significant guidance for increased academic achievement in the system.

A clear focus on student achievement is evidenced by an increase in the percentage of schools meeting federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) guidelines. From 2007 to 2009, the system showed an increase from 67% to 81% of schools meeting this guideline. Another indicator of increased student achievement is the eighth grade writing assessment, with proficiency scores increasing 23% from 2007 to 2010. Additional evidence is found in the Academic Galleries, which are displays and presentations at the system office highlighting student work validating authentic learning. Interviews with various stakeholder groups reflected an environment where student achievement is the first and foremost priority in the system.

**Directives:**

- Ensure adherence to the schedule for completion of the strategic plan and its presentation to the public.
- Monitor processes to maintain current data on the Balanced Scorecard and use the resulting data analysis to inform the work of the system.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SYSTEM AND INITIATE A REVIEW OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS THAT SUPPORT THE ORGANIZATION.**

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this recommendation.

X	<b>Completed</b> - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the recommendation.
	<b>In Progress</b> - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address and/or complete the recommendation.
	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

A revised organizational chart of system-level leadership is completed and available in print and on the system’s website. This chart establishes clear lines of authority and responsibility for the effective work of the system. The human resources department has established a priority for the revision of job descriptions within the system, beginning with key system leadership positions, then established vacancies, then remaining positions. This is an ongoing process.

The superintendent has reviewed organizational effectiveness and recommended difficult reorganization, in part due to budget deficits but also to promote system efficiency. System leadership reflected in interviews their understanding of clear lines of authority, resulting in clearly defined expectations and high levels of accountability. Principals reported ready access to and support from their area superintendents.

**Directives:**

- Complete the revision of job descriptions for all system positions.
- Monitor the organizational effectiveness of the leadership structure and continue refining the organizational chart.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** ESTABLISH A CLEARLY ARTICULATED ACTION PLAN (INCLUDING DEFINING THE CHAIN OF COMMAND) FOR THE RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON HAVING ALL STAFF AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION UNDERSTAND AND COMMIT TO THE PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING SUCH PROBLEMS.

**Progress Status:** Please indicate the progress the institution has made toward addressing this recommendation.

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	<b>Has Not Addressed</b> - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

**Summary of Findings:**

With the superintendent’s leadership, the board of education is participating in professional growth activities to develop skills in conflict resolution. Agendas and artifacts from the February 2010 board retreat indicate a discussion of conflict resolution led by the board attorney. The board is participating in book studies, selected by the superintendent, to focus on team effectiveness, building trust, and conflict resolution. Currently they are finishing their second book in this process. The board has agreed to monthly retreats focusing on professional reading and organizational effectiveness.

A chart outlining the complaint resolution process has been approved by the board and is posted on the system’s website. Each board member has signed an assurance of Standards of Practice for the Governance Team, which further outlines practices and protocols for communication, complaints, and conflict resolution. This document further identifies protocols for referring complaints and concerns to the appropriate people. Another document approved by the board is the Governance Handbook, prepared by the superintendent as a standard operations handbook to establish governance norms for the board and the system. Interviews with board members indicated that some members did not support these documents, but the majority of the board was supportive of efforts to guide effective and efficient operations.

System-level staff indicated that they follow the protocols and operating procedures outlined in these documents. As board policies are reviewed and revised, Administrative Rules are developed by the system staff to identify clearly any necessary procedures for implementing the policies.

**Directives:**

- Monitor and enforce established protocols for efficient board operations.
- Ensure that staff at all levels understand and follow the procedures for addressing problems and complaints
- Use analysis of board member self evaluation to plan and implement further professional growth activities to strengthen a culture of trust and aligned direction of the board.

**Conclusion**

The Monitoring Team recognized many areas in which the institution is making progress toward the mandates and recommendations made by the Special Review Teams. The directives provided in this report are designed to help the institution meet all of the mandates and recommendations established by the Special Review Teams within the

communicated deadlines. The institution may discuss these directives with AdvancED to gain assistance and support in using them to meet the mandates and recommendations.

The institution will be expected to submit a follow-up Institution Progress Report by August 31, 2010. The institution will use the report to document the additional actions it has taken to address the mandates and recommendations of the Special Review Teams. A Monitoring Team will visit the institution in October 2010 to assess the institution's progress.