# Report of the External Review Team for Galena City School District

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AdvancED

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# Introduction

The External Review is an integral component of AdvancED Performance Accreditation and provides the institution with a comprehensive evaluation guided by the results of diagnostic instruments, in-depth review of data and documentation, and the professional judgment of a team of qualified and highly trained evaluators. A series of diagnostic instruments examines the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of leadership to effect continuous improvement, and the degree to which the institution optimizes its use of available resources to facilitate and support student success.  The results of this evaluation are represented in the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) and through critical observations, namely, Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

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

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

Standards help to delineate what matters. They provide a common language through which an education community can engage in conversations about educational improvement, system effectiveness, and achievement. They serve as a foundation for planning and implementing improvement strategies and activities and for measuring success. AdvancED Standards were developed by a committee comprised of talented educators and leaders from the fields of practice, research, and policy who applied professional wisdom, deep knowledge of effective practice, and the best available research to craft a set of robust standards that define institutional quality and guide continuous improvement. Prior to implementation, an internationally recognized panel of experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research reviewed the standards and provided feedback, guidance and endorsement.

The AdvancED External Review Team uses AdvancED Standards, associated indicators and criteria related to student performance and stakeholder engagement to guide its evaluation. The Team examines adherence to standards as well as how the institution functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics expected of an accredited institution. The Standards, indicators and related criteria are evaluated using indicator-specific performance levels. The Team rates each indicator and criterion on a scale of 1 to 4. The final scores assigned to the indicators and criteria represent the average of the External Review Team members' individual ratings.

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

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

# Use of Diagnostic Tools

A key to examining the institution is the design and use of diagnostic tools that reveal the effectiveness with which an institution creates conditions and implements processes and practices that impact student performance and success. In preparation for the External Review the institution conducted a Self Assessment that applied the standards and criteria for accreditation. The institution provided evidence to support its conclusions vis a vis organizational effectiveness in ensuring acceptable and improving levels of student performance.

- an indicator-based tool that connects the specific elements of the criteria to evidence gathered by the team;
- a student performance analytic that examines the quality of assessment instruments used by the institution, the integrity of the administration of the assessment to students, the quality of the learning results including the impact of instruction on student learning at all levels of performance, and the equity of learning that examines the results of student learning across all demographics;
- a stakeholder engagement instrument that examines the fidelity of administration and results of perception surveys seeking the perspective of students, parents, and teachers;
- a state-of-the-art, learner-centric observation instrument, the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) that quantifies students' engagement, attitudes and dispositions organized in 7 environments: Equitable Learning, High Expectations, Supportive Learning, Active Learning, Progress Monitoring and Feedback, Well-Managed Learning, and Digital Learning.  All evaluators must be trained, reach acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability, and certified to use this research-based and validated instrument.

The External Review Team's findings and critical observations are shared in this report through the IEQ™ results as well as through the identification of Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

# Index of Education Quality

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

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

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

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

# Benchmark Data

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

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

# Powerful Practices

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

# Opportunities for Improvement

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

# Improvement Priorities

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

# The Review

The External Review for Galena City School District was held November 16 - 19, 2014. The team consisted of three team members from Alaska and two from outside of the state. Prior to the review, team members had access to the Accreditation Reports prepared by the district and each of the three schools. the district conducted a well-orchestrated Internal Review. A planning meeting was held to orient team members to the district and confirm logistics. Two team members made visits to two of the Interior Distance Education of Alaska (IDEA) offices in Anchorage and Fairbanks to substantiate information regarding the home school program offered by the district.

Pre-meetings were held with the superintendent's designee along with numerous emails prior to the review. The schedule was coordinated by the designee, superintendent and the Lead Evaluator. Additional district staff assisted with preparations for the External Review by collecting and organizing evidence and helping with the logistics related to travel for the team.

Due to the unique setting of the Galena City School District, the team was housed in officer's quarters on a former Air Force base where the Galena Interior Learning Academy (GILA) boarding school students reside, are fed, attend Career and Technical Education (CTE) and many of their core academic classes.  Logistic

arrangements for the visit were handled in an exemplary manner.

The External Review Team thanks the district and all staff members who prepared for the External Review. The team had access to all needed materials, information and personnel. The team found the participation of all stakeholders to be thoughtful, honest and supportive. The accommodations and workspace for the team were comfortable and provided an interesting perspective to the Galena Interior Learning Academy campus. The team enjoyed outstanding meals provided in the GILA cafeteria and prepared by a master chef, who supervises several students in the Culinary Arts Program.

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

The team work sessions were supported by spontaneous discussions, questions and answers generated by team members across the Standards, Domains, themes and trends, these leading to even deeper understanding and reporting of the trends and issues facing the system. During team discussions special attention was paid to the correlations between the Domain scores, AEN ratings, eleot™ scores and the perceptions of the team.

While on site team members interviewed 87 stakeholders including staff, parents, community members and board members. All three of the district's schools were visited and 45 classroom observations were conducted using the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool (eleot™).

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| Stakeholder Interviewed | Number |
|---|---|
| Superintendents | 1 |
| Board Members | 3 |
| Administrators | 5 |
| Instructional Staff | 17 |
| Support Staff | 8 |
| Students | 40 |
| Parents/Community/Business Leaders | 13 |
| **Total** | **87** |

# Results

## Teaching and Learning Impact

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement is the primary expectation of every institution. The relationship between teacher and learner must be productive and effective for student success. The impact of teaching and learning includes an analysis of student performance results, instructional quality, learner and family engagement, support services for student learning, curriculum quality and efficacy, and college and career readiness data. These are all key indicators of an institution's impact on teaching and learning.

A high-quality and effective educational system has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve their highest potential and be prepared for a successful future. The positive influence an effective educator has on learning is a combination of "student motivation, parental involvement" and the "quality of leadership" (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Research also suggests that quality educators must have a variety of quantifiable and intangible characteristics that include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The institution's curriculum and instructional program should develop learners' skills that lead them to think about the world in complex ways (Conley, 2007) and prepare them to have knowledge that extends beyond the academic areas. In order to achieve these goals, teachers must have pedagogical skills as well as content knowledge (Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y., 2010). The acquisition and refinement of teachers' pedagogical skills occur most effectively through collaboration and professional development. These are a "necessary approach to improving teacher quality" (Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S., 2008). According to Marks, Louis, and Printy (2002), staff members who engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective institutions "supports teachers by creating collaborative work environments." Institutional leaders have a responsibility to provide experiences, resources, and time for educators to engage in meaningful professional learning that promotes student learning and educator quality.

AdvancED has found that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning. The curriculum provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Institutions with strong improvement processes move beyond anxiety about the current reality and focus on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, i.e., data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, and Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R., 2005). The study also identified six

key strategies that performance-driven systems use: (1) building a foundation for data-driven decision making, (2) establishing a culture of data use and continuous improvement, (3) investing in an information management system, (4) selecting the right data, (5) building institutional capacity for data-driven decision making, and (6) analyzing and acting on data to improve performance. Other research studies, though largely without comparison groups, suggested that data-driven decision-making has the potential to increase student performance (Alwin, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Lafee, 2002; McIntire, 2002).

Through ongoing evaluation of educational institutions, AdvancED has found that a successful institution uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine strategies to improve student performance. The institution implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained, and the institution demonstrates progress in improving student performance and institution effectiveness.

## Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level. | 2.60 | 2.69 |
| 3.2 | Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice. | 1.40 | 2.55 |
| 3.3 | Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations. | 2.80 | 2.54 |
| 3.4 | System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success. | 2.00 | 2.70 |
| 3.5 | The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels. | 1.80 | 2.57 |
| 3.6 | Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning. | 2.00 | 2.48 |
| 3.7 | Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning. | 2.20 | 2.67 |

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.8 | The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress. | 2.00 | 2.97 |
| 3.9 | The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience. | 2.20 | 2.46 |
| 3.10 | Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses. | 2.00 | 2.57 |
| 3.11 | All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning. | 2.00 | 2.60 |
| 3.12 | The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students. | 1.80 | 2.63 |

## Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5.1 | The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system. | 2.00 | 2.67 |
| 5.2 | Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning. | 1.80 | 2.48 |
| 5.3 | Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data. | 1.80 | 2.14 |
| 5.4 | The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level. | 1.80 | 2.45 |
| 5.5 | System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders. | 2.00 | 2.85 |

## Student Performance Diagnostic

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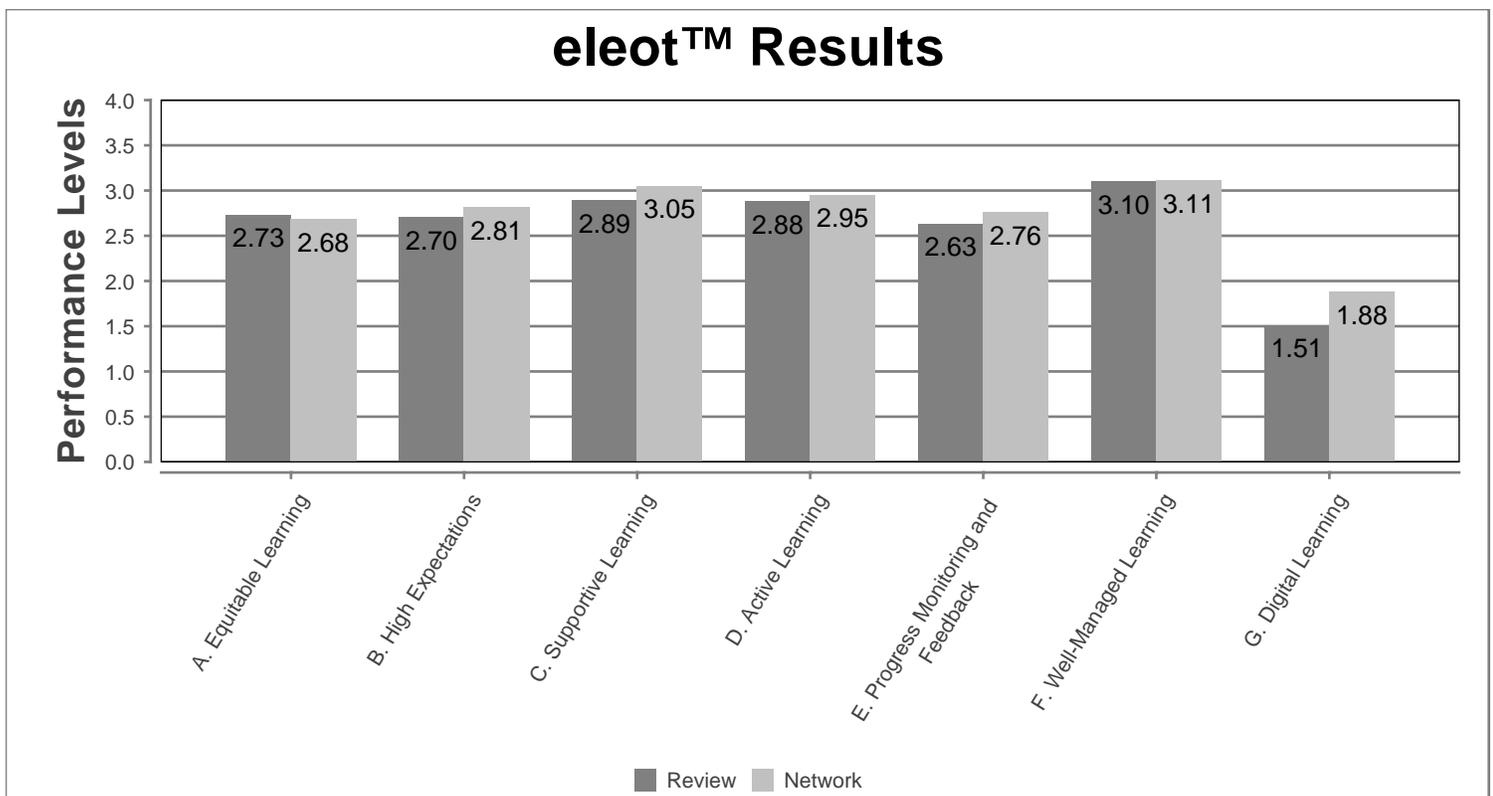
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

| Evaluative Criteria | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|
| Assessment Quality | 2.00 | 3.32 |
| Test Administration | 3.00 | 3.62 |
| Equity of Learning | 2.40 | 2.52 |
| Quality of Learning | 2.80 | 3.06 |

# Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

Every learner should have access to an effective learning environment in which she/he has multiple opportunities to be successful. The Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and well-managed. An environment where high expectations are the norm and active learning takes place. It measures whether learners' progress is monitored and feedback is provided and the extent to which technology is leveraged for learning.

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. Every member of the External Review Team is required to be trained and pass a certification exam that establishes inter-rater reliability. Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale (4=very evident; 3=evident; 2=somewhat evident; and 1=not observed). The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in eleot™ as well as benchmark results across the AdvancED Network.

## eleot™ Results

| Performance Levels | | |
|---|---|---|
| A. Equitable Learning | Review 2.73 | Network 2.68 |
| B. High Expectations | 2.70 | 2.81 |
| C. Supportive Learning | 2.89 | 3.05 |
| D. Active Learning | 2.88 | 2.95 |
| E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback | 2.63 | 2.76 |
| F. Well-Managed Learning | 3.10 | 3.11 |
| G. Digital Learning | 1.51 | 1.88 |

The External Review Team observed 45 classrooms in the two onsite schools. The scores for the learning environments were slightly below the AdvancED Network scores except for one environment. The Equitable Learning and the Well-Managed Learning environments were rated the highest by the External Review Team. The Equitable Learning Environment was rated higher than the AdvancED Network score and the Well Managed learning environment was rated only one tenth of a point lower than the AdvancED Network score.

The External Review Team made consistent comments about how well managed the students were. Only one team member observed a student's behavior corrected by a teacher during a classroom observation. Students were well mannered and focused on the instruction.

The Career and Technical Educational (CTE) classes were particularly focused and task orientated. Students were engaged and self-directed on completing assignments. The variety and quality of CTE courses offered is commendable.  It was in these programs that the use of technology by students was apparent as they were engaged in individual research and projects often receiving individual support and guidance from the instructors.

Students throughout the district are engaged and interested in school. The district enjoys a very high graduation rate that can be attributed to the engaging curriculum and instruction and attention to every student's experience.

## eleot™ Data Summary

| A. Equitable Learning | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Item** | **Average** | **Description** | **Very Evident** | **Evident** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Not Observed** |
| 1. | 2.44 | Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs | 22.22% | 28.89% | 20.00% | 28.89% |
| 2. | 3.51 | Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support | 55.56% | 40.00% | 4.44% | 0.00% |
| 3. | 3.09 | Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied | 26.67% | 55.56% | 17.78% | 0.00% |
| 4. | 1.87 | Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences | 8.89% | 20.00% | 20.00% | 51.11% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.73** | | | | | | |

| B. High Expectations | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Item** | **Average** | **Description** | **Very Evident** | **Evident** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Not Observed** |
| 1. | 3.07 | Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher | 24.44% | 60.00% | 13.33% | 2.22% |
| 2. | 3.09 | Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable | 28.89% | 55.56% | 11.11% | 4.44% |
| 3. | 2.29 | Is provided exemplars of high quality work | 26.67% | 20.00% | 8.89% | 44.44% |
| 4. | 2.78 | Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks | 26.67% | 40.00% | 17.78% | 15.56% |
| 5. | 2.29 | Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing) | 17.78% | 26.67% | 22.22% | 33.33% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.70** | | | | | | |

| C. Supportive Learning | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Item** | **Average** | **Description** | **Very Evident** | **Evident** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Not Observed** |
| 1. | 3.11 | Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive | 31.11% | 48.89% | 20.00% | 0.00% |
| 2. | 3.20 | Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning | 37.78% | 46.67% | 13.33% | 2.22% |
| 3. | 2.67 | Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback) | 26.67% | 35.56% | 15.56% | 22.22% |
| 4. | 3.13 | Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks | 37.78% | 44.44% | 11.11% | 6.67% |
| 5. | 2.33 | Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs | 17.78% | 28.89% | 22.22% | 31.11% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.89** | | | | | | |

| D. Active Learning | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Item** | **Average** | **Description** | **Very Evident** | **Evident** | **Somewhat Evident** | **Not Observed** |
| 1. | 2.78 | Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students | 26.67% | 35.56% | 26.67% | 11.11% |
| 2. | 2.51 | Makes connections from content to real-life experiences | 31.11% | 24.44% | 8.89% | 35.56% |
| 3. | 3.36 | Is actively engaged in the learning activities | 55.56% | 26.67% | 15.56% | 2.22% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.88** | | | | | | |

| E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 2.62 | Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning | 20.00% | 37.78% | 26.67% | 15.56% |
| 2. | 2.73 | Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding | 24.44% | 37.78% | 24.44% | 13.33% |
| 3. | 3.00 | Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content | 28.89% | 51.11% | 11.11% | 8.89% |
| 4. | 2.38 | Understands how her/his work is assessed | 15.56% | 31.11% | 28.89% | 24.44% |
| 5. | 2.42 | Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback | 17.78% | 35.56% | 17.78% | 28.89% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.63** | | | | | | |

| F. Well-Managed Learning | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 3.42 | Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers | 44.44% | 53.33% | 2.22% | 0.00% |
| 2. | 3.40 | Follows classroom rules and works well with others | 44.44% | 51.11% | 4.44% | 0.00% |
| 3. | 3.00 | Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities | 33.33% | 48.89% | 2.22% | 15.56% |
| 4. | 2.27 | Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities | 13.33% | 31.11% | 24.44% | 31.11% |
| 5. | 3.40 | Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences | 42.22% | 55.56% | 2.22% | 0.00% |
| **Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.10** | | | | | | |

| G. Digital Learning | | | % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Average | Description | Very Evident | Evident | Somewhat Evident | Not Observed |
| 1. | 1.60 | Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning | 13.33% | 6.67% | 6.67% | 73.33% |
| 2. | 1.58 | Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning | 11.11% | 8.89% | 6.67% | 73.33% |
| 3. | 1.36 | Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning | 8.89% | 4.44% | 0.00% | 86.67% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.51 | | | | | | |

# Findings

**Improvement Priority**

Develop and implement formal processes for all teachers to modify and adjust curriculum and instruction based on student achievement results from a variety of data sources.

(Indicators 3.2, 5.4)


*Evidence and Rationale*

The External Review Team found little evidence of a formal data management system that is used to inform teaching and learning.Teachers have access to the Alaska Standards Based Assessment (ASBA) data but that comes late in the year and is not disaggregated by teacher.The district has begun the process of creating and implementing common formative assessments, but those are not completed for every course.The district does not use common assessments to gather baseline data for students new to the district, nor are there formal assessments used to monitor or predict student progress.Teachers at the two local high schools utilize the services of an outside agency to score writing samples on a regular basis. In the absence of student baseline predictive or trend data, teachers do not have the resources needed to make real-time decisions regarding the curriculum and instruction used. Additionally, teachers indicated they do not regularly discuss student progress or adjustments to curriculum during their planning and collaborative work time.Teachers, who indicated they modify lesson content, plan instructional interventions or reteach to meet student needs, do so based primarily on anecdotal data and their own familiarity with the students. Additionally teachers did not indicate that student data is used on a regular basis to modify and adjust curriculum at the classroom level.

Decisions to curriculum and instruction based on real-time verifiable data are likely to positively impact student achievement.

**Improvement Priority**

Establish and maintain a clearly defined student assessment system that includes a range of data sources that can be used to inform teaching and learning and to communicate student, school and district performance to stakeholders.

(Indicators 5.1, 5.2, 5.5)

*Evidence and Rationale*

The Galena City School District has no formal data management system to collect, organize and monitor student progress.Through interviews and a review of evidence, the External Review Team found that the district utilizes the achievement data provided through the Alaska Standards Based Assessment (ASBA), a statewide assessment given at grades 4, 8 and 10 to determine student achievement goals. Individual schools within the district utilize a small number of summative and predictive assessments to inform student progress, but the district has not developed and implemented a clearly defined model for collecting baseline, predictive or summative data for all students. Teachers in the district have begun the process of developing common formative assessments, but these are not completed in all grade levels for all courses, nor are they shared between and among all schools within the district. Interior Distance Education of Alaska (IDEA) utilizes assessment information from STAR Reading and Math to inform teachers and parents of student performance and progress, but these programs are not available to stakeholders at Sydney Huntington School (SHS) or Galena Interior Learning Academy (GILA).

Districts with access to formal structures that include a variety of baseline, predictive and trend data are able to analyze the needs of students in an on-going manner, leading to increased student achievement.

**Opportunity for Improvement**

Design and implement a rigorous and continuous plan of professional development for both professional and support staff that is aligned with the district's purpose and direction, and includes the evaluation, interpretation and use of data.

(Indicators 3.11, 5.3)

*Evidence and Rationale*

Staff Development for both the Galena Interior Learning Academy and Sidney Huntington Schools has, for a number of years, been provided primarily through a contract with an outside provider Performance Excellence for All Kids (PEAK) learning systems. While both the district's Accreditation Report and staff interviews report that this has been very helpful in building instructional capacity among staff, this capacity is not being measured in a way that is helpful in linking teacher performance to improvements in student performance. The current adopted professional development model also has limitations in that it is primarily focused on instructional practice, but provides little or no content area training. There is little evidence to support that surveys administered after training are used in meaningful ways to inform future training. There is also a lack of data to support that the use of these strategies has improved student performance.

A district that has a robust program of professional development for both professional and support staff that is based on data and is aligned with the schools' purpose, should see improvements in both teacher

effectiveness and student performance.

## Opportunity for Improvement

Design and implement a rigorous district-wide curriculum, based on shared values and beliefs that provides an equitable and challenging learning experience for all students in each of the district's three very unique schools, and also ensures students have opportunities to develop skills that lead to success at the next level. (Indicators 1.3, 3.1)

*Evidence and Rationale*

The curriculum of the Galena City School District appears to be  the Alaska State Standards. This was supported by staff interviews and other provided artifacts. While there was evidence that teachers utilize the Standards in developing lesson plans, this is not adequate for the provision of a comprehensive learning foundation for all students.  Nor does the development of course descriptions, particularly in the area of Career and Technical Education, constitute a comprehensive curriculum. Many teachers have developed curriculum maps, but there is no unifying district structure to guide what is taught and why. The district is just beginning to systemize these course descriptions. The External Review Team recognized the challenges of developing a curriculum that integrates three such different schools with unique challenges and relatively small enrollment.Through a process of communication among leaders and staff, the Galena District needs to develop a curriculum that reflects its commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning, as well as its commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding and the application of knowledge and skills.They should approach this in a systematic way that sets goals and timelines and a process for assessment of results.

A school district with a well-designed and dynamic curriculum provides an instructional foundation in which it is much more likely that all students are challenged, are provided equitable learning experiences and have sufficient opportunities to meet their learning goals.

## Opportunity for Improvement

Develop a formal structure of professional learning communities that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.
(Indicators 3.5)

*Evidence and Rationale*

While there is a structure and an expectation for teachers at all three of the schools in the Galena City School District to meet regularly for planning and conversations about student learning, the district is not systematic about communicating a common model of collaboration, nor can they clearly link collaboration to improvement results in instructional practice, system effectiveness or student performance. Teachers have effectively used their collaboration time in many positive ways, including the development of curriculum maps and parallel assessments for various courses. According to staff interviews, however, the district fails to provide explicit training for teachers in what is expected of their collaboration activities, including the analysis and use of data to inform instruction and methods for documenting and assessing learning outcomes in order to consistently achieve meaningful results for students.

Effective collaborative learning groups provide forums for addressing both district and school improvement efforts in a variety of important areas. Teachers who work in structured collaborative teams are more likely to see improved quality of teaching practices, more effective differentiation of instruction, improved positive working climate, enhanced teacher confidence, greater equity of student learning and measurable growth in achievement for all students.

## Opportunity for Improvement
Implement, coordinate and evaluate a comprehensive district program of learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of all students at all levels of proficiency to include interventions for students with special learning needs (e.g., second languages).
(Indicators 3.12, 4.8)

### *Evidence and Rationale*
The Galena City School District has determined that while students in the Sidney Huntington School (SHS) and the Interior Distance Education Academy (IDEA) are performing at generally high levels, many of the students at the Galena Interior Learning Academy (GILA) are in need of remediation. This is due in part to the fact that students are from many very rural areas of the state and many have faced academic and personal challenges in their home villages.  Additionally, English is a second language for many of these students and/or English is not regularly spoken in their homes. Interviews with stakeholders, as well as student performance data, supported a high level of satisfaction with instruction at all three schools, but acknowledge that some students need additional help in order to be successful and meet their goals. Support for English language learners was particularly cited as a need by both the school and stakeholders. In order to meet the needs of all students, the district would benefit from a clearly defined process to evaluate the effectiveness of current programs in order to implement improvements to their counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning programs.

When districts and their schools focus on clearly and systematically identifying the needs of all students and student groups, and implement effective practices to address these needs, it is much more likely that students will be well served and successful.

## Opportunity for Improvement
Leverage the knowledge and skills gained through the implementation of Performance Excellence for All Kids (PEAK) Learning Systems instructional strategies to clearly define a district instructional model that can be linked to student success.
(Indicators 3.3, 3.6)

### *Evidence and Rationale*
The district has utilized the services of PEAK for several years. Teachers new to the system participate in the summer institute and the contract with the agency includes on-site coaching from PEAK professionals. This partnership has led to teacher knowledge of a variety of instructional strategies for different parts of a lesson, needs of the students, and curriculum content.

PEAK provides a plethora of choices for teachers which are not always applied consistently. The teacher evaluation process, both formal and informal, does not provide an avenue for data collection on the use of strategies, nor is there a process for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional strategies using student performance data.

A program of clearly defined district-wide expectations for instruction which can be linked to student achievement, will allow teachers to focus the strategies used, measure the effectiveness of the instruction and ultimately improve student learning.

# Leadership Capacity

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress towards its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its institutional purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to enact strategies to improve results of student learning.

Purpose and direction are critical to successful institutions. A study conducted in 2010 by the London-based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reported that "in addition to improving performance, the research indicates that having a sense of shared purpose also improves employee engagement" and that "lack of understanding around purpose can lead to demotivation and emotional detachment, which in turn lead to a disengaged and dissatisfied workforce."

AdvancED has found through its evaluation of best practices in more than 32,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning that are aligned with the institutions' vision and supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Governance and leadership are key factors in raising institutional quality. Leaders, both local administrators and governing boards/authorities, are responsible for ensuring all learners achieve while also managing many other facets of an institution. Institutions that function effectively do so without tension between the governing board/authority, administrators, and educators and have established relationships of mutual respect and a shared vision (Feuerstein & Opfer, 1998). In a meta-analysis of educational institution leadership research, Leithwood and Sun (2012) found that leaders (school and governing boards/authority) can significantly "influence school conditions through their achievement of a shared vision and agreed-on goals for the organization, their high expectations and support of organizational members, and their practices that strengthen school culture and foster collaboration within the organization." With the increasing demands of accountability placed on institutional leaders, leaders who empower others need considerable autonomy and involve their communities to attain continuous improvement goals. Leaders who engage in such practices experience a greater level of success (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Similarly, governing boards/authorities that focus on policy-making are more likely to allow institutional leaders the autonomy to make decisions that impact teachers and students and are less responsive to politicization than boards/authorities that respond to vocal citizens (Greene, 1992).

AdvancED's experience, gained through evaluation of best practices, has indicated that a successful institution has leaders who are advocates for the institution's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The institution's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

# Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1.1 | The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success. | 2.20 | 2.67 |
| 1.2 | The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success. | 2.00 | 2.69 |
| 1.3 | The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills. | 1.80 | 2.87 |
| 1.4 | Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning. | 2.20 | 2.64 |

# Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 2.1 | The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools. | 3.00 | 2.96 |
| 2.2 | The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively. | 3.00 | 2.99 |
| 2.3 | The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively. | 2.80 | 3.20 |
| 2.4 | Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction. | 3.00 | 3.00 |
| 2.5 | Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction. | 2.00 | 2.69 |

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 2.6 | Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success. | 1.80 | 2.78 |

# Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys (student, parent, and teacher) are directly correlated to the AdvancED Standards and indicators. They provide not only direct information about stakeholder satisfaction but also become a source of data for triangulation by the External Review Team as it evaluates indicators.

Institutions are asked to collect and analyze stakeholder feedback data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the administration of the surveys by institution, survey results, and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results.

| Evaluative Criteria | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Questionnaire Administration | 1.00 | 3.43 |
| Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis | 2.80 | 3.12 |

# Findings

**Improvement Priority**

Establish and maintain a clearly defined student assessment system that includes a range of data sources that can be used to inform teaching and learning and to communicate student, school and district performance to stakeholders.
(Indicators 5.1, 5.2, 5.5)

*Evidence and Rationale*

The Galena City School District has no formal data management system to collect, organize and monitor student progress.Through interviews and a review of evidence, the External Review Team found that the district utilizes the achievement data provided through the Alaska Standards Based Assessment (ASBA), a statewide assessment given at grades 4, 8 and 10 to determine student achievement goals. Individual schools within the district utilize a small number of summative and predictive assessments to inform student progress, but the district has not developed and implemented a clearly defined model for collecting baseline, predictive or summative data for all students. Teachers in the district have begun the process of developing common formative assessments, but these are not completed in all grade levels for all courses, nor are they shared between and among all schools within the district. Interior Distance Education of Alaska (IDEA) utilizes

assessment information from STAR Reading and Math to inform teachers and parents of student performance and progress, but these programs are not available to stakeholders at Sydney Huntington School (SHS) or Galena Interior Learning Academy (GILA).

Districts with access to formal structures that include a variety of baseline, predictive and trend data are able to analyze the needs of students in an on-going manner, leading to increased student achievement.

## Opportunity for Improvement
Design and implement a rigorous district-wide curriculum, based on shared values and beliefs that provides an equitable and challenging learning experience for all students in each of the district's three very unique schools, and also ensures students have opportunities to develop skills that lead to success at the next level. (Indicators 1.3, 3.1)

### Evidence and Rationale
The curriculum of the Galena City School District appears to be  the Alaska State Standards. This was supported by staff interviews and other provided artifacts. While there was evidence that teachers utilize the Standards in developing lesson plans, this is not adequate for the provision of a comprehensive learning foundation for all students.  Nor does the development of course descriptions, particularly in the area of Career and Technical Education, constitute a comprehensive curriculum. Many teachers have developed curriculum maps, but there is no unifying district structure to guide what is taught and why. The district is just beginning to systemize these course descriptions. The External Review Team recognized the challenges of developing a curriculum that integrates three such different schools with unique challenges and relatively small enrollment.Through a process of communication among leaders and staff, the Galena District needs to develop a curriculum that reflects its commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning, as well as its commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding and the application of knowledge and skills.They should approach this in a systematic way that sets goals and timelines and a process for assessment of results.

A school district with a well-designed and dynamic curriculum provides an instructional foundation in which it is much more likely that all students are challenged, are provided equitable learning experiences and have sufficient opportunities to meet their learning goals.

## Opportunity for Improvement
Develop, implement and communicate a system-wide process that engages all three schools and district stakeholders in meaningful involvement and execution of the system's purpose, directions, and goals to drive student success.
(Indicators 1.1, 1.2, 2.5)

### Evidence and Rationale
The External Review Team learned of the unique structure and perceived relationship of the three schools in the system. Through interviews and analysis of the Accreditation Report, it was learned there are important distinctions between the three schools and reported concerns about loss of services and support for the Sidney

Huntington School in favor of the larger and unique IDEA and GILA programs. Faculty members and parents reported a lack of quality communication and information regarding the vision for programs among the three schools. Individual school purpose statements are not in place in all three schools. When innovative ideas are implemented in one school or the other, they are not shared for the purpose of system-wide improvement that supports student success. The relationship of the schools as a part of a system has not been implemented with fidelity, and presently there is a feeling among some SHS staff and parents of inconsistent focus; therefore all stakeholders are not engaged in the implementation of district's strategic plan.

A shared vision and purpose of student success is significant in the implementation of a strategic plan and creation of a system environment.

## Powerful Practice

The Galena City School District is a unique school delivery model that has achieved significant academic success by providing education through a traditional K-12 school Sidney Huntington School, a boarding school for native students from villages throughout Alaska Galena independent Learning Academy, and the Interior Distance Education of Alaska  which has increased the resources available for all students in the Galena City School District.
(Indicators 1.2)

*Evidence and Rationale*

Meeting the educational needs of students in the interior region and villages of Alaska is a priority of the Galena City School District. The SHS serves students who live in the remote city of Galena and the GILA program serves 200 plus boarding students. The IDEA program began in 1997 and has grown to become the largest school in Alaska. As a state-wide distance education program, approximately 3,400 home schooled students participate through the services offered through five geographic region offices located throughout Alaska. The services offered provide educational support for families. The External Review Team learned that each service center is staffed with certified teachers, field representatives, a technology support person, classified staff and administrative staff all in place to provide students with the materials and methodology to complete the home school curriculum. Each location provides support materials and equipment for home school family's use. The assignment of a contact teacher who reviews lesson plans, reviews samples of work and assigns grades for each student is a unique position linking the home school to the district. The state-wide participation in IDEA, through its large enrollment, helps support other programs and initiatives in the Galena City School District.

The educational design of IDEA provides support and benefits the student population as evidenced in assessment results and graduation rates. Additionally the large variety of programs offered at the two onsite Galena schools is supported by the large enrollment in IDEA.

# Resource Utilization

The use and distribution of resources must be aligned and supportive of the needs of an institution and the students served. Institutions must ensure that resources are aligned with the stated mission and are distributed equitably so that the needs of students are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes an examination of the allocation and use of resources, the equity of resource distribution to need, the ability of the institution to ensure appropriate levels of funding and sustainability of resources, as well as evidence of long-range capital and resource planning effectiveness.

Institutions, regardless of their size, need access to sufficient resources and systems of support to be able to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts that result in a continuous improvement cycle. Indeed, a study conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L., 2003) "demonstrated a strong relationship between resources and student success... both the level of resources and their explicit allocation seem to affect educational outcomes."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in the more than 32,000 institutions in the AdvancED Network that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff members to improve their effectiveness and ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

## Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4.1 | The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs. | 3.00 | 2.98 |
| 4.2 | Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations. | 2.80 | 2.98 |
| 4.3 | The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff. | 2.60 | 3.05 |
| 4.4 | The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system. | 3.60 | 2.67 |

| Indicator | Description | Review Team Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4.5 | The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system. | 3.00 | 2.82 |
| 4.6 | The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs. | 2.60 | 2.64 |
| 4.7 | The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served. | 3.00 | 2.65 |
| 4.8 | The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students. | 3.00 | 2.64 |

# Findings

**Opportunity for Improvement**

Implement, coordinate and evaluate a comprehensive district program of learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of all students at all levels of proficiency to include interventions for students with special learning needs (e.g., second languages).

(Indicators 3.12, 4.8)

*Evidence and Rationale*

The Galena City School District has determined that while students in the Sidney Huntington School (SHS) and the Interior Distance Education Academy (IDEA) are performing at generally high levels, many of the students at the Galena Interior Learning Academy (GILA) are in need of remediation. This is due in part to the fact that students are from many very rural areas of the state and many have faced academic and personal challenges in their home villages.  Additionally, English is a second language for many of these students and/or English is not regularly spoken in their homes. Interviews with stakeholders, as well as student performance data, supported a high level of satisfaction with instruction at all three schools, but acknowledge that some students need additional help in order to be successful and meet their goals. Support for English language learners was particularly cited as a need by both the school and stakeholders. In order to meet the needs of all students, the district would benefit from a clearly defined process to evaluate the effectiveness of current programs in order to implement improvements to their counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning programs.

When districts and their schools focus on clearly and systematically identifying the needs of all students and student groups, and implement effective practices to address these needs, it is much more likely that students will be well served and successful.

**Powerful Practice**

The Galena School District has demonstrated strategic resource management that is creative and resourceful.

(Indicators 4.4)

*Evidence and Rationale*

The Galena School District has been gifted several buildings that were part of a retired Air Force Base.  The maintenance and energy costs to maintain the buildings have been and will continue to be a challenge.  It is important to the residence school and vocational mission of the school to manage the facilities in a holistic manner.

The district has demonstrated systemic management of resources through development and implementation of policies, budget allocations and strategic plans.  Future plans include upgrading several facilities and the remodeling of others.  Funding has been identified through district savings and state grant funding.  In addition, a long-range maintenance plan has been developed. Of particular importance is the creative thinking around energy conservation that will lead to a Biomass program for students.  Successful implementation will lead to contribution to the local economy and job preparation for students and reduce the cost of energy to the school district. The implementation of a systemic plan will reduce costs, create opportunities for students and provide a robust economy.

# Conclusion

The Galena City School District is a unique district in that it has three widely diverse educational programs. Two are brick and mortar one of which is a traditional K-12 school housed in a quality facility in Galena, Alaska. The second is a boarding school for approximately 200 native students who attend from small villages throughout the state of Alaska. The campus is located on a former Air Force base three miles from Galena allowing sharing of students, faculty and facilities. The emphasis in this program is the Career and Technical Education skill courses offered along with core academic subjects. There is little faculty turnover in these two programs offering stability and strength in the instruction year after year.

The IDEA program is a unique home school delivery model because of the support options available to home school families delivered through the five outreach centers located throughout the state. The centers are well staffed and provide instructional support along with technical support and instructional resources. Support services include certified teachers, a field representatives (home schooling parent on staff), a technology specialist and other support staff. In addition to the available staff, there are copiers and laminators, a workshop room for sharing with the families or for academic clubs to meet, along with a lending library that includes books and other educational materials (microscopes, games, DVDs, books on tape, etc.) for check-out and reference. IDEA is unique by bringing home school students and a public school into a truly cooperative effort that is fully individualized for each student in both materials and methodology. IDEA provides educational, emotional, intellectual and financial support to those families who desire to work in partnership with a public school district.

During the External Review, members of the IDEA Advisory Council were onsite, as were IDEA students who participate in exploratory courses in the Career and Technical Education programs. The External Review Team was able to interview and interact with stakeholders from this group from around the state of Alaska, verifying the far-reaching impact the home school program has on the entire district.

Galena City School District worked on a review and revision of its vision and mission statement and published a Strategic Plan that outlines its Core Values. The Strategic Plan is posted in all schools, work areas and is widely known by staff. There is ownership in the strategic plan and it is often referred to as the source for vision and director for the educational programs in the Galena City School District.

The future is a focus for the district. Efforts are in place to secure a Biomass study aimed at replacing the use of diesel fuel to provide heating for the Galena City School District buildings. The goal is to provide a supporting curriculum for students to be engaged in the Biomass operations. Another future plan includes remodeling the former headquarters building at the former base providing space for science labs and math rooms for both GILA and SHS secondary students. There is some concern among towns people concerned about losing the traditional K-12 model that has been in place for a number of years. Major efforts are needed for communicating the advantages for making a change to the proposed model and the benefits for planned student learning.

A number of logistic issues are apparent because of factors related to the remote location. Substitutes are not readily available as most of the town is employed by the school district or the Department of Fish and Game. Staff longevity is a benefit for the district with the average teacher tenure at 12 years. This factor provides stability for the district, but the remote location could prove to be a barrier to future employees. Internet service for the schools is available, but the speeds are slow and the system oftentimes becomes overloaded. Increasing bandwidth is a challenge the district is planning to address in the near future.

There is medical support from the community through a family clinic, mental health facilities and partnerships with the Department of Game and Fish and the City of Galena.

Regarding the instructional framework for the district, and there are no common assessments for students throughout the district. Teachers create curriculum based on the state standards. Some curriculum maps have been written by teachers and efforts are in place to the ensure alignment with state standards.  Interviewees indicated that teachers knew what to teach and how well students were learning because they knew the students. Sydney Huntington School has been awarded the highest rating given to schools by the Alaska Department of Education for outstanding student performance, but GILA does not share that level of student achievement.

A teacher evaluation model is under construction and professional development is based on the PEAK learning systems coaching model that has been in place a number of years. PEAK offers a multitude of instructional strategies for teachers, but teachers interviewed were not able to articulate what the district expected of them. While the team was on site, PEAK coaches were in the district meeting with administrators and teachers as a part of their ongoing contract support with the district.

The district has built professional development time into the schedule for all teachers in the two local schools. Teachers are grouped into collaborative teams, but interviewees indicated that the discussions are focused on content and not on specific students or interventions needed. The elementary teachers are assigned to teach in grade bands, so collaboration occurs among them, but it is primarily informal in process.

The Galena City School District should use the findings from this review to guide the continuous improvement process. There are many wonderful components in place in the Galena City School District that impact education and support in the lives of students from all over Alaska. There is pride and strength in the faculty as demonstrated through curriculum offerings in the three schools. The next step toward district wide improvement is provided through the Improvement Priorities.

## Improvement Priorities

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

- Develop and implement formal processes for all teachers to modify and adjust curriculum and instruction based on student achievement results from a variety of data sources.
- Establish and maintain a clearly defined student assessment system that includes a range of data

sources that can be used to inform teaching and learning and to communicate student, school and district performance to stakeholders.

# Accreditation Recommendation

## Index of Education Quality

The Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) provides a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of indicators and evaluative criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus.

The IEQ™ comprises three domains: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; and 3) the use of resources and data to support and optimize learning.

The overall and domain scores can range from 100-400. The domain scores are derived from: the AdvancED Standards and indicators ratings; results of the Analysis of Student Performance; and data from Stakeholder Feedback Surveys (students, parents, and staff).

|  | External Review IEQ Score | AdvancED Network Average |
|---|---|---|
| Overall Score | 233.17 | 282.79 |
| Teaching and Learning Impact | 211.43 | 274.14 |
| Leadership Capacity | 230.00 | 296.08 |
| Resource Utilization | 295.00 | 286.32 |

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

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

# Addenda

## Individual Institution Results (Self-reported)

| Institution Name | Teaching and Learning Impact | Leadership Capacity | Resource Utilization | Overall IEQ Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Galena Interior Learning Academy | 238.10 | 218.18 | 257.14 | 235.90 |
| Interior Distance Education of Alaska (IDEA) | 271.43 | 272.73 | 271.43 | 271.79 |
| Sidney C. Huntington School | 257.14 | 272.73 | 285.71 | 266.67 |

# Team Roster

| Member | Brief Biography |
| --- | --- |
| Leonard D. Paul | Leonard Paul is the Vice President, Northwest Region for AdvancED. Prior to this assignment he served as the Associate Director for the Northwest Accreditation Commission. Prior to the accreditation positions, he served with the Clark County School District as Region Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent Secondary Schools, High School Principal, Curriculum Specialist, and teacher. He was named the Nevada Principal of the year in 1991, received the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce Community Achievement in Education Award in 2001 and received the Northwest Accreditation Distinguished Service award in 2004. His early career experience was a scene designer and scenic artist for the Las Vegas entertainment industry. He received degrees from Northeastern College, Colorado State University and an advanced degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. |
| Dr. Teresa Johnson | Dr. Johnson retired from the Anchorage School District after 28 years of service. During that time Dr. Johnson served as a teacher, school administrator, and central office supervisor.  Her area of expertise centered around student activities and high risk youth. She also has a wide range of experience in Human Resources, instruction and professional development.  She has been recognized and received several awards for her service to education. Her educational background includes a BS degree from Boston University, a Masters degree and superintendent certification from UAA and a Doctorate degree from University of Oregon. |
| Dr. Edlow Barker | Edlow Barker retired as of July, 2011 as the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction for the Spotsylvania County Schools system in Virginia (located mid-way between the cities of Washington, DC, and Richmond.)  Prior to serving in that role, Dr. Barker served as a director of instruction, principal (elementary, middle, and high), assistant principal, teacher, and coach.  His experience was primarily in Virginia, but includes two years as Director in a multi-national private school in Cali, Colombia, South America.  He earned his undergraduate degree from Wake Forest University, the Master's Degree from the University of Virginia, and the Doctorate from Virginia Tech.  He has served on numerous visiting committees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Virginia Department of Education, in addition to his work with AdvancED.  He has taught graduate courses for the University of Virginia and Radford University. Related leadership activities include development of educational foundations in two public school districts, development of a regional academic competition league for high schools, Chairman of the Virginia High School League, and development of a regional Governor's School program for gifted students. |
| Mrs. Mary Johnstone | As State Director for AdvancED/Alaska, Mary Johnstone provides school improvement and accreditation services to accredited schools throughout Alaska. Over thirty years of volunteer work with the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) offered her the opportunity to serve on and lead many visiting accreditation teams in both rural and urban Alaska.  She was elected as Chair of the Alaska State Committee, NWAC, and served as President of the Northwest Commission.  Prior to joining AdvancED as Alaska Director, Mary worked in the Anchorage School District as both a teacher and school administrator.  She has been honored as a Milken Educator and was named a National Distinguished Principal.  She served as President of the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals (AAESP), and was a member of the Board of the Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA).  She currently serves as an Administrative Intern Supervisor for the University of Phoenix.  Her degrees are from Seattle University and the University of Alaska. |

| Member | Brief Biography |
|--------|----------------|
| Dr. Barbara J Remondini | Dr. Remondini is the Vice President of Accreditation - Public School Systems for AdvancED. Prior to this assignment, Barbara served as Assistant Superintendent in the J.O. Combs Unified School District, San Tan Valley, AZ, where she was responsible for the Human Resources, Curriculum and Instruction, and Professional Development Departments. From 2001 to 2010, Dr. Remondini was the Principal of Brimhall Jr. High in Mesa, AZ. From 1996 to 2001, Dr. Remondini served as the Assistant Principal of Lynn Middle School in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Barbara has taught grades 4-7, specializing in Math and Science. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction and Ph.D. in Educational Administration, all from New Mexico State University. She is currently an adjunct faculty member for Northern Arizona University in the Educational Leadership Department. |
| Mr. Douglas Waclawski | Douglas Waclawski got into education by accident: he took an elementary teaching science class in college, switching from a science degree to elementary education. His experiences over his 20-plus years in education have been highly diverse, which serves him well in his position at Homer High School.<br>Douglas started out teaching 6th graders at a school on the edge of the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. From there he moved to Michigan where, in a small K-12 school, he wore many hats, including teaching special education, high school math, middle school science, and K-12 technology. He was also at various times the technology fix-it guy, technology coordinator, grant writer and administrator, student services coordinator, and basketball and cross-country running coach.<br>In his free time he traveled to schools around the State of Michigan as a technology coach and presented at conferences on various technology topics.<br>A move to Alaska put Douglas at the helm of Razdolna School where enrollment was growing rapidly. He managed a larger staff and negotiated getting a new building for 3 years before moving on to the challenge of being assistant principal at Homer High School. Enjoying the amazing staff and students there, he was happy to take over as principal this year, continuing the tradition of excellent education that has been the hallmark of that school. |

# Next Steps

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

# About AdvancED

AdvancED is the world leader in providing improvement and accreditation services to education providers of all types in their pursuit of excellence in serving students. AdvancED serves as a trusted partner to more than 32,000 public and private schools and school systems – enrolling more than 20 million students - across the United States and 70 countries.

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) that was founded in 1917 became part of AdvancED.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. The Accreditation Divisions of AdvancED share research-based quality standards that cross school system, state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified and consistent process designed to engage educational institutions in continuous improvement.

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