


*Charting a
Steady Course
for Excellence
in Education*



District Accreditation

Standards Assessment Report

Board of Trustees and Superintendent

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Dr. Grady Butler
Area 23

Danna Edwards
Area 21

Megan E. Hickerson
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Seated, left to right: Leola Robinson-Simpson, Lynda Leventis-Wells, Tommie Reece, Megan Hickerson, Pat Sudduth. Standing, left to right: Dan Moravec, Roger Meek, Debi Bush, Chuck Saylor, Dr. Keith Ray, Danna Edwards, Dr. Grady Butler.



*Dr. Phinnize J. Fisher
Superintendent*

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Section 1
***Executive Summary
of Community Profile***

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report

The Community

Long recognized as a leader in public education, Greenville County Schools is the largest school district in South Carolina and the 51st largest in the nation, according to the latest publication from the National Center of Education Statistics. Located in the northwestern part of the state, the district encompasses a geographic area of approximately 800 square miles.

According to the U. S. Census Bureau, the population of Greenville County is approximately 417,000 (2006). Of this group, approximately 75% are white; 20% are African-American; and 6% are Hispanic. Eighty (80) percent are high school graduates (2000) and 26% have a Bachelor's Degree or higher (2000). Median household income is \$42,500 (2004); 13% live below the poverty level (2004).



Vision/Goals

Greenville County Schools is dedicated to providing educational experiences for children that are standards-based, challenging, and rigorous; that reflect a commitment to equity; that demonstrate an appreciation of diversity; that convey high expectations for students and staff; and that promote continuous improvement in student achievement at all levels.

The district defines its commitment to quality educational experiences for all students through the District Education (Strategic) Plan. The plan defines overall district direction, guides district and school priorities, and serves as the basis of human, financial, and operational decisions. The plan was originally developed in 1999 by a group of 60 individuals, including elected officials, corporate leaders, parents, principals, teachers, district staff, and other community members, under the direction of the Superintendent. The most recent plan update was conducted in the spring of 2008. The revised plan was reviewed by the district's Board of Trustees at its June Committee of the Whole meeting and formally approved at the Board meeting in August.

The District Strategic Plan articulates a clear mission, vision, and set of beliefs that serve as the plan's foundation.



Mission

We provide educational experiences, in cooperation with the home and community, that prepare students for life-long learning and for ethical, productive participation in a democratic society and the global community.

Vision

To become an exemplary school district in which every child achieves to his or her maximum ability through a rigorous, engaging curriculum and systems of support that cultivate the potential and promote the well-being of every individual child.



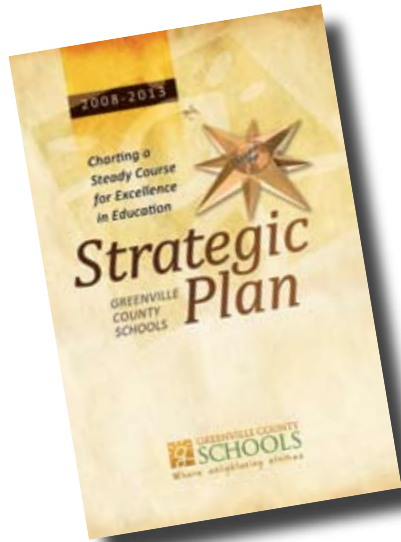
Beliefs

We believe...

- All students can learn.
- Students are the center of the educational process.
- Students learn best in a safe, orderly, and inviting environment.
- Students should have competent teachers, principals, and support personnel.
- Parents' involvement and volunteer services support and enhance the teaching and learning process.
- Students should have equal access to educational opportunities.
- Students have the responsibility to be active learners.
- Curriculum and instruction should meet the needs of all students.
- Educational experiences should enable students to communicate effectively, solve problems competently, think critically and creatively, and act responsibly.
- Education is the shared responsibility of home, school, and community.

Executive Summary of School System Profile

The strategic plan outlines five performance goals; goal 1 is intended as the priority goal, with goals 2-5 intended to support goal 1.



Goal 1: Raise the academic challenge and performance of each student.

Goal 2: Ensure quality personnel in all positions.

Goal 3: Provide a school environment supportive of learning.

Goal 4: Effectively manage and further develop necessary financial resources.

Goal 5: Improve public understanding and support of public schools.

Each goal is supported by a series of objectives, key strategies and benchmarks through which progress can be measured.

Each school also participates in the annual strategic planning process. The unit of analysis at the school level is the school portfolio, consisting of a demographic profile of the school, a data-based academic needs assessment, identification of desired academic outcomes, an action plan and professional development plan for achieving outcomes, and a plan for measuring results. School and classroom goals are aligned to the District Strategic Plan goals.

Directly related to the strategic planning process are the district's comprehensive, data-based performance assessment systems for the superintendent and for principals (PAS-A), teachers (PAS-T) and Instructional Coaches (PAS-IC). Each system has been designed to reflect the strategic plan goals and is based on a series of performance standards proven through research to define effective school leadership.

The analysis of assessment and other data is a key component of the planning process and guides plan development at all levels. The district maintains a comprehensive profile of the system, the students, and the community. Data are maintained electronically and are available at both the district and school levels. Student data are maintained through the state-required SASI system and include individual and group demographics, a summary of achievement outcomes derived from various assessments, and non-achievement data related to attendance, discipline, and drop-outs. A comprehensive student locator system enables effective management of students' school assignments, the district's school-choice program, and the bus transportation system.

Executive Summary of School System Profile

The Strategic Plan guides the allocation of all financial resources and the direction and development of the district's long-term and short-range general fund budget plans. Initiatives funded from 2004-05 through 2008-09 have all been rooted in the Strategic Plan.

Eighty percent (80%) of the items included in the general fund budget have direct impact at the school level in the form of funding for salaries, utilities, supplies, and maintenance. All additions to the annual budgets in the five year period from FY05 through FY09 have been for direct and indirect services provided to schools. The South Carolina Department of Education, through its In\$ite system, found that the district spends a significantly lower percentage of its budget on program management than do other districts across the state.

Programs and Services

The district serves 69,227 students in state-of-the art facilities, including 5 child development centers, 48 elementary schools, 18 middle schools, 14 high schools, 4 career centers and 7 special program centers. Over the past five years, student enrollment has grown by an average of 1300 students each year.

Sixty percent (60%) of GCS students are white, 24% are African-American, 10% are Hispanic, and 6% are of other Ethnic origins. Forty-two percent (42%) of the students qualify for free/reduced-price meals, up from 35% five years ago.

The district's commitment to effectively serve its diverse population is multi-dimensional and reflected programmatically and in choices made by local school communities.

Program Diversity

- The Charles Townes Center for the Highly Gifted serves the district's most academically able students; other academically capable students are served through the district's gifted/talented program, available in every school. Presently, 13,361 students are identified as Academically Gifted and Talented, representing 28% of the student population in grades three through twelve.
- The Fine Arts Center supports artistically gifted students.
- The district offers a strong program of services for students with disabilities. Sixteen percent of the student population qualifies for these services; 3% are eligible for speech services only. Students with severe disabilities are served in the district's model program at Washington Center.
- Four percent (4%) of district students meet state specifications for participation in programs for students who are Limited English Proficient. In the past six years, the population of students whose first language is a language other than English has grown from 631 in 2002 to 5,652 in 2008-09.
- Students with specific interests or talents may attend one of the district's magnet schools, the International Baccalaureate Program, available at all levels in four geographically located feeder patterns across the district, or one of 4 career centers that support career and technology education.
- At the Roper Mountain Science Center, students and their families can explore a variety of science-related topics in a unique, hands-on setting. Collaborative instructional programs between RMSC and the district are ongoing.

Executive Summary of School System Profile

- Alternative programs are available for middle and high school students who are unsuccessful in the regular classroom.
- STAR Academy offers a unique instructional setting that enables overage middle school students to accelerate their learning and graduate with their peers.
- The Teen Parent Program provides opportunities for pregnant girls to stay in school through their pregnancies.
- Twilight School, Virtual School, and credit recovery options encourage students to stay in school.
- The district offers a comprehensive Life-long Learning Program of adult education, workforce development, and GED preparation.

Community Diversity

The district offers strong systems to support all schools. However, local school communities make choices about ways in which to enhance those systems for their children. Single gender classes, available in several schools, and local decisions to require school uniforms are two examples.

The district employs 9,048 staff members. Of those, 5,495 are professional employees; 3,553 are classified staff. Of the district's core academic teachers, 97.6% are Highly Qualified under the guidelines of No Child Left Behind. According to the 2007 District Report Card issued by the state of South Carolina, 58% of district teachers hold advanced degrees; 423 are National Board Certified.

The average student attendance rate is 96%; average teacher attendance rate is 96%. Transportation is provided to approximately one third of the student population on one of 350 buses. Breakfast is served daily to over 13,000 students.

The BEST (Building Equity Sooner for Tomorrow) building program, now in its final completion stages, reflects the district's commitment to provide and support a quality educational program for its students. BEST represents the largest school facilities building program in the history of South Carolina. The program, begun in 2002, was made possible through a unique financing structure that allowed significant replacement of existing sub-par facilities and the construction of new and/or expanded facilities to accommodate growth needs through 2010 with no annual millage impact to taxpayers. As a result of the BEST program, 69 newly constructed or renovated schools have been dedicated in the past five years. The district's comprehensive Long Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program guides planning for future facility needs based on student growth projections and educational programming changes.

Executive Summary of School System Profile

Numerous awards and honors earned by GCS provide evidence of the district's progress on its continuous improvement journey. School level awards include:

- 13 National Blue Ribbon Schools
- 17 Palmetto's Finest Schools (highest award for educational quality in the state of South Carolina)
- 40 Red Carpet Schools (South Carolina Department of Education award for an inviting, family-friendly school climate)
- 27 National PTA Schools of Excellence (2 Schools Added in 2008-09; Total Now 29)
- 31 Baldrige Model Schools (Quality Tools Process)
- 8 Newsweek's Top High Schools

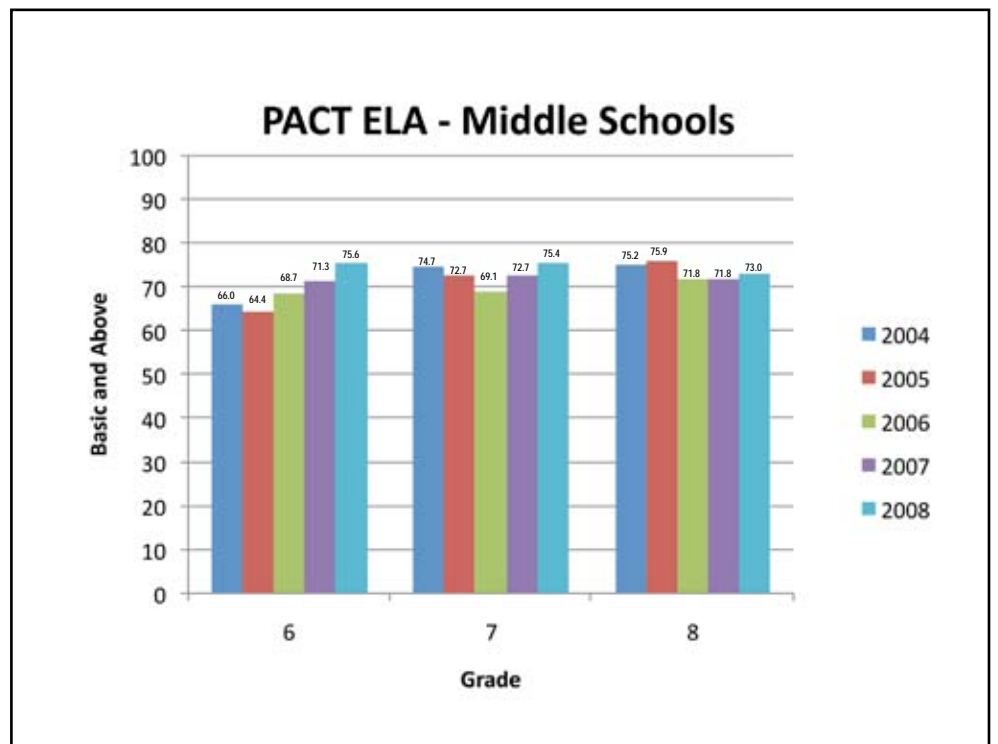
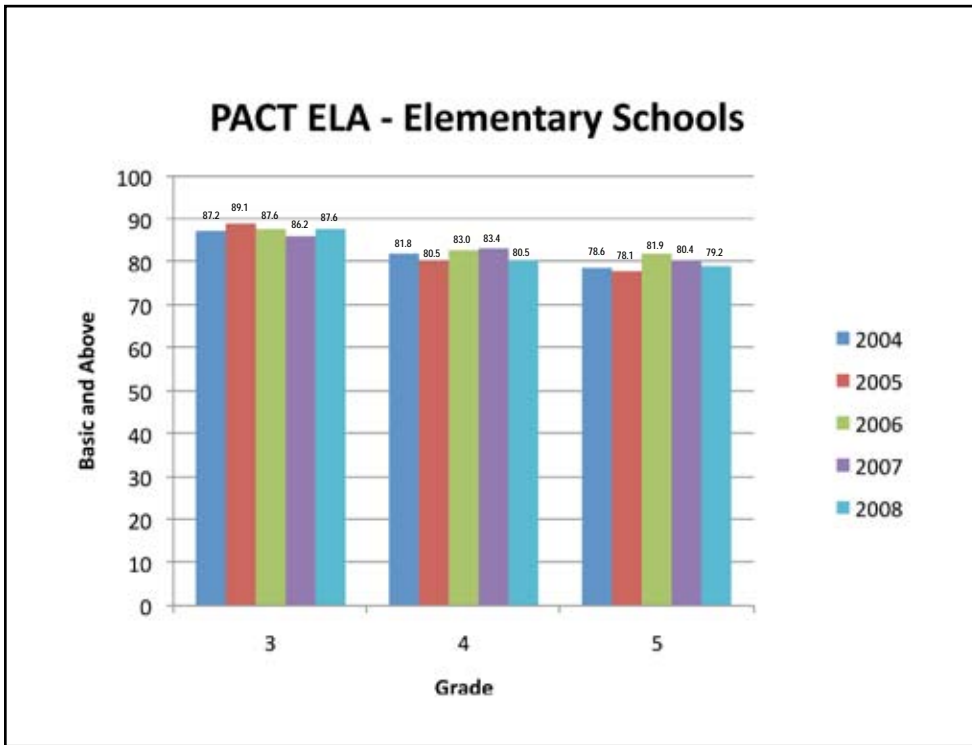
Student Performance

The district uses a variety of assessments to measure and analyze student achievement. Among them are the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT), administered each spring to students in grades three through eight, and the High School Assessment Program (HSAP) exit examination which students take for the first time in grade 10. Both are summative assessments and used as the accountability measures for schools and districts in South Carolina. PACT subtests include English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students who score at the basic performance level or above are considered to be ready for the next grade.

HSAP subtests include English language arts and mathematics. Students must score at the basic level or higher and have four opportunities throughout their high school careers to pass all sections of the exit examination.

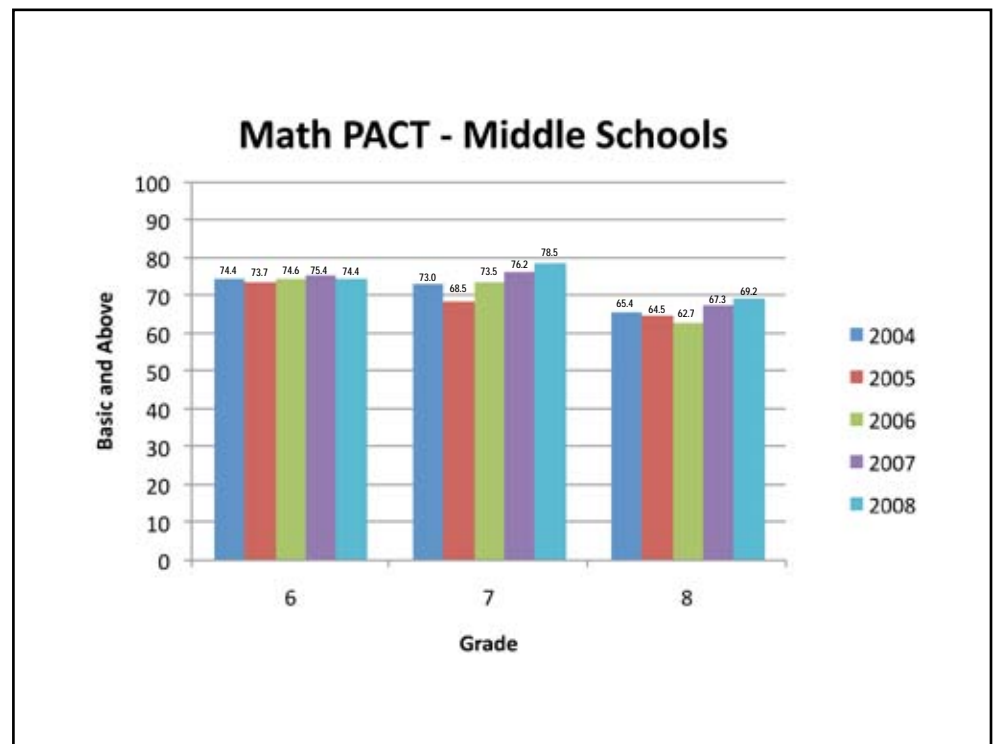
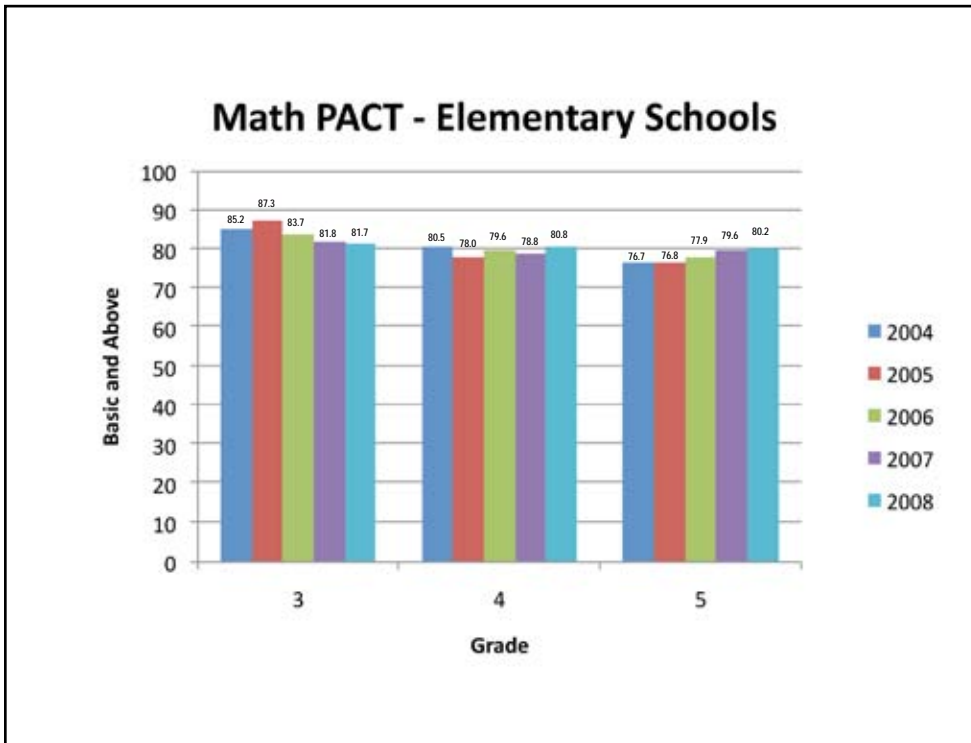


The following graphs summarize student performance on PACT and HSAP over the past five years.



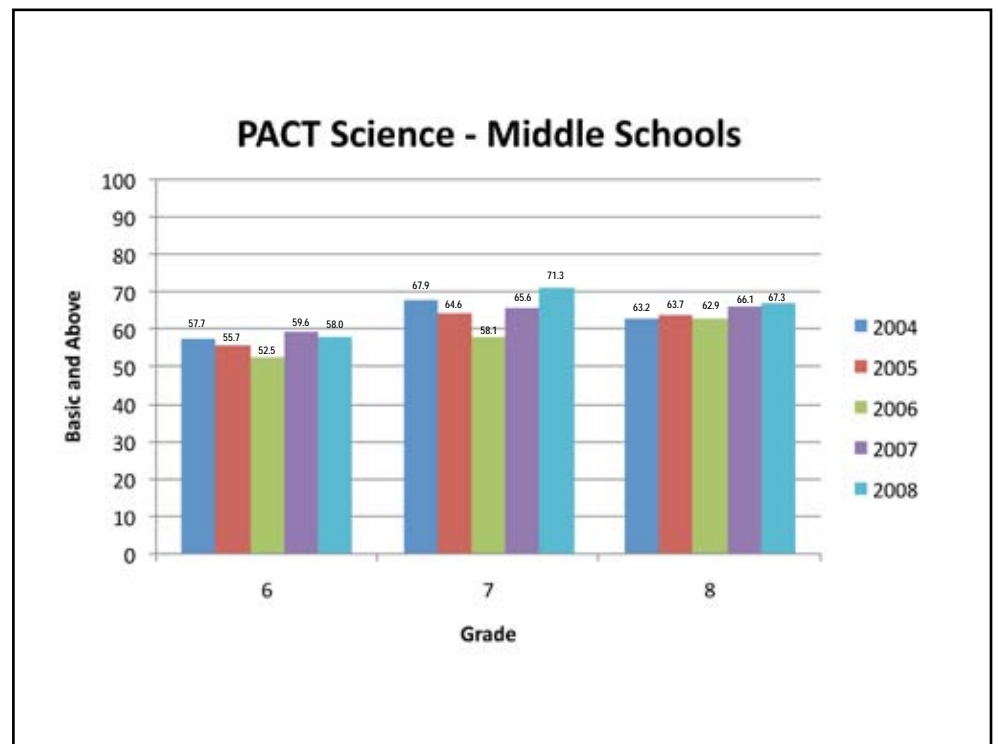
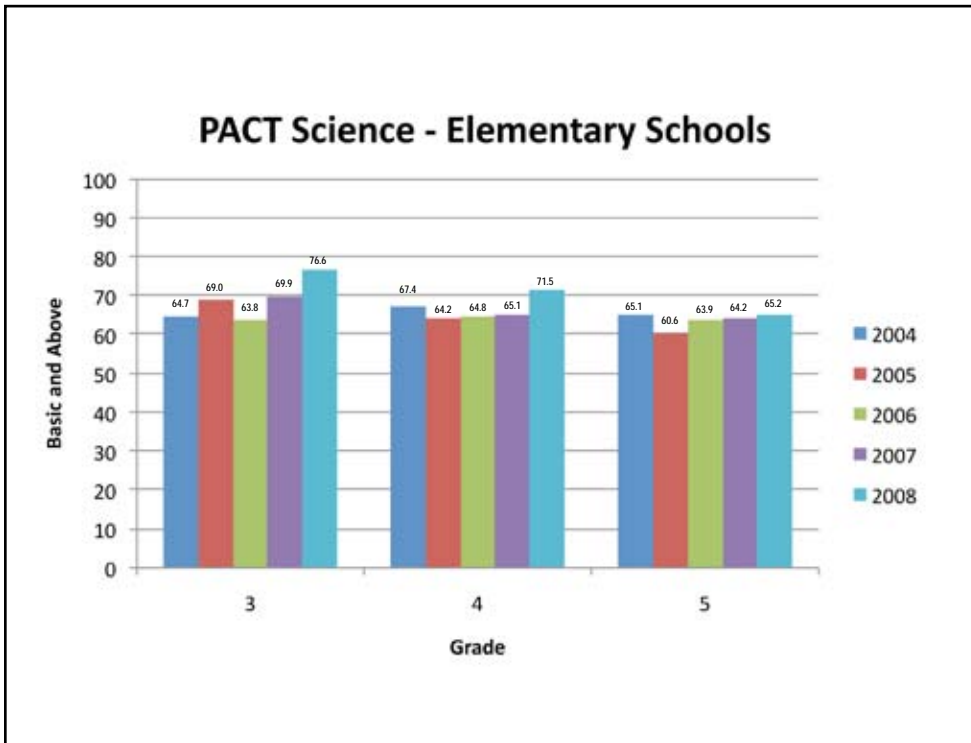
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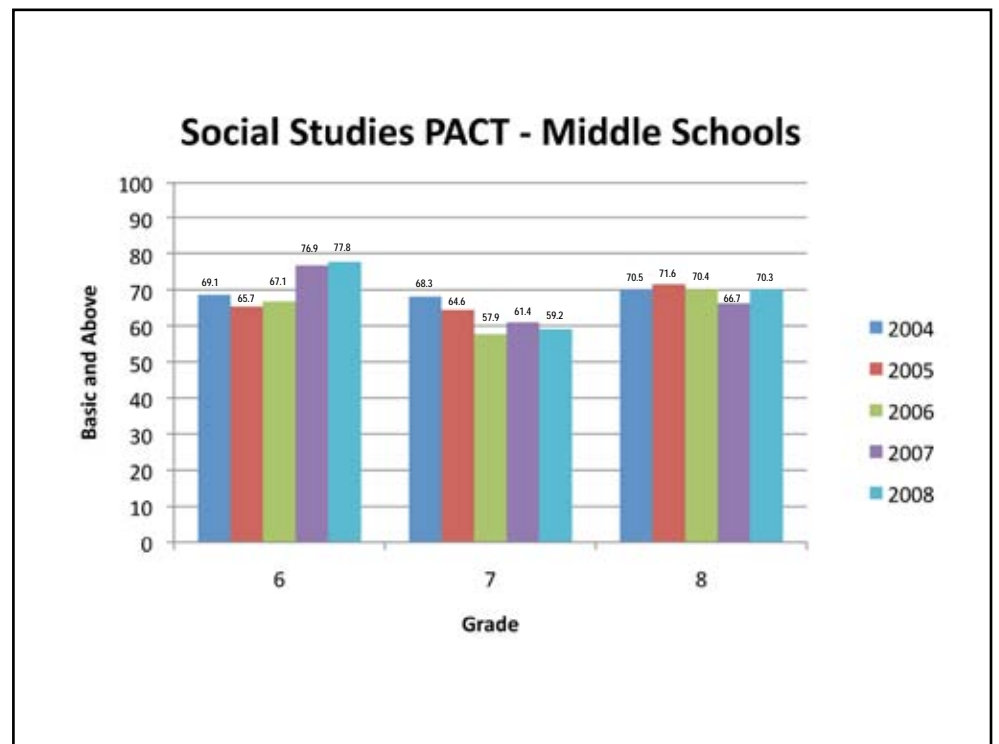
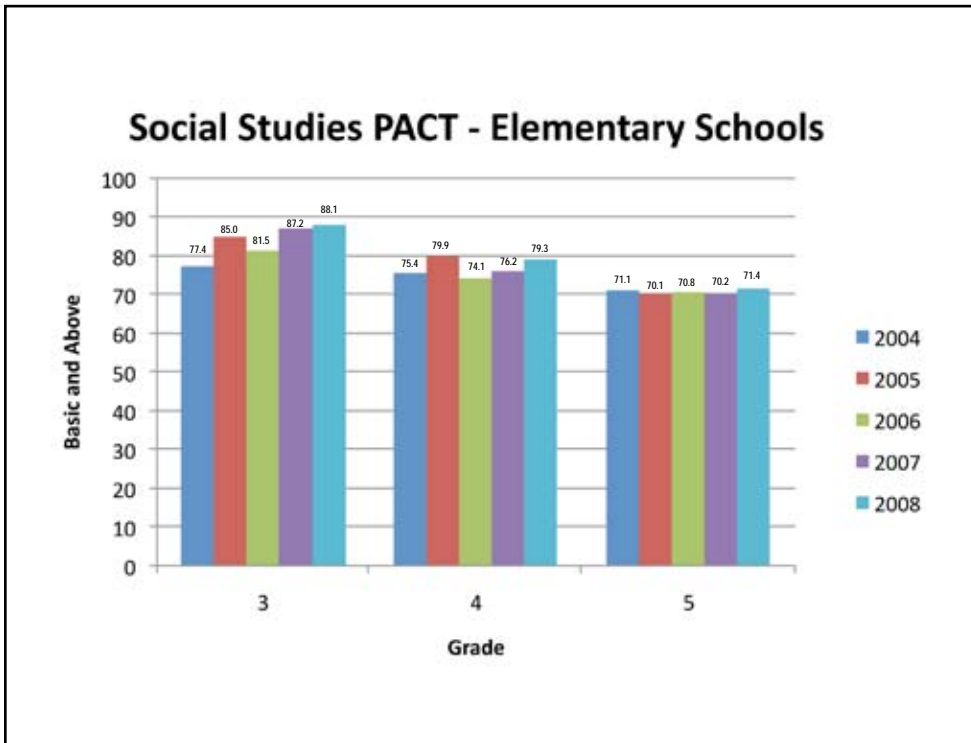
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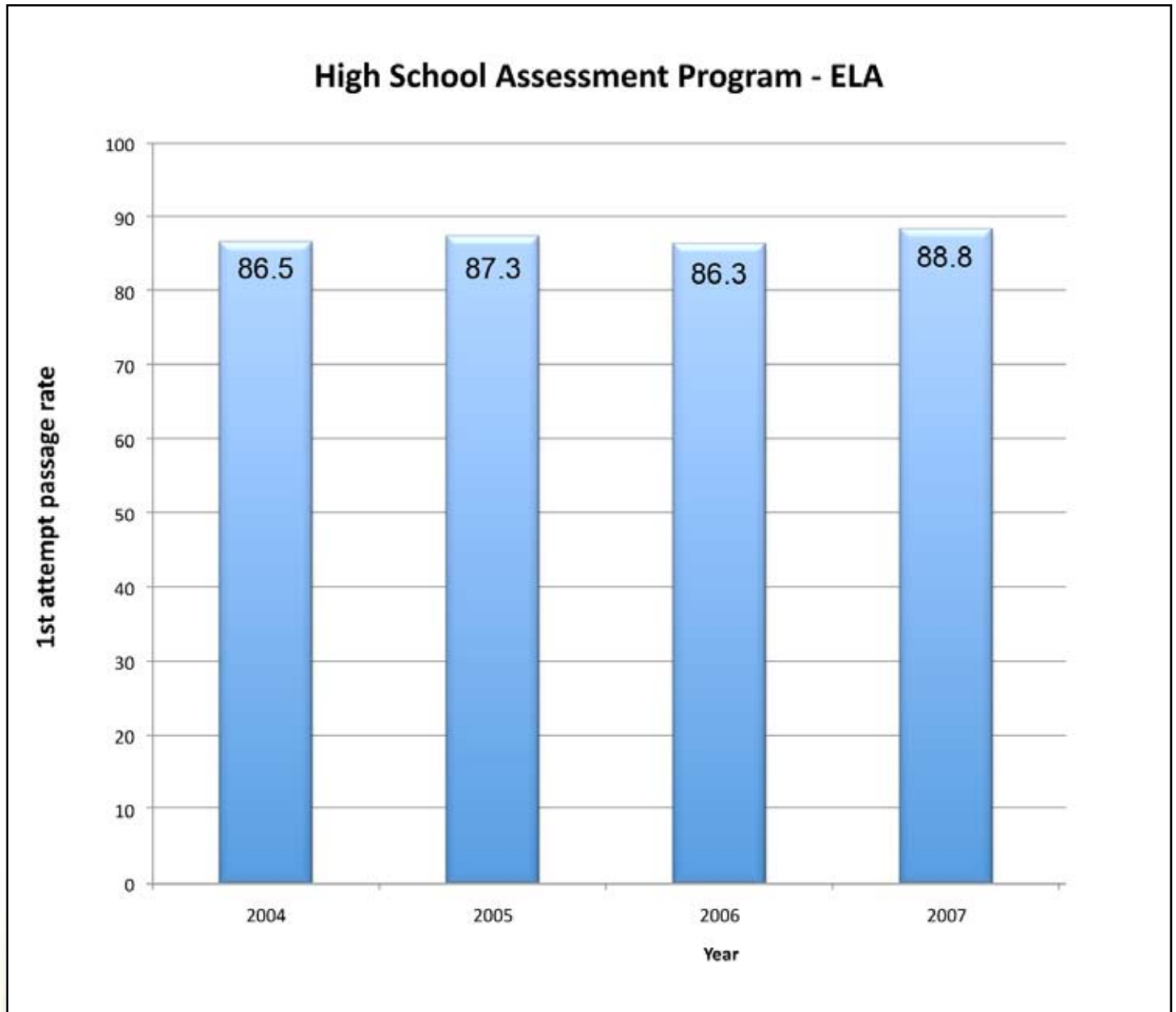
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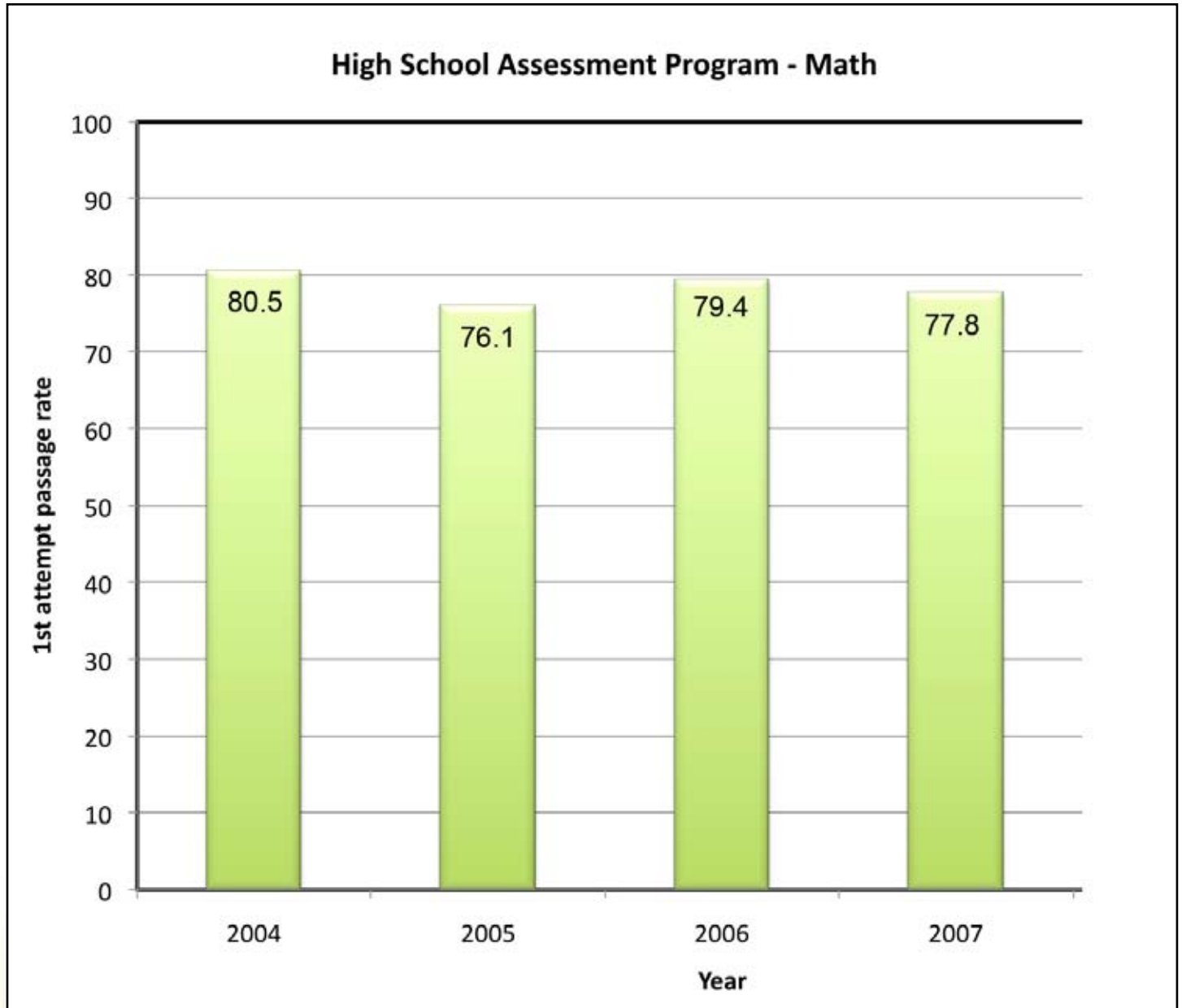
Executive Summary of School System Profile

The following graphs summarize student performance on PACT and HSAP over the past five years.



Executive Summary of School System Profile

The following graphs summarize student performance on PACT and HSAP over the past five years.



Trends and Issues Impacting the District

Benefits

- Strong community quality of life enhances the district's ability to recruit and retain quality teachers and staff.
- Extensive community focus on educating all children is demonstrated through the array of businesses, organizations, agencies, and other groups that provide financial, human, and material support to the district and its schools.
- Community-wide interest in and focus on the arts promote multifaceted support of the arts in schools.
- The expanding research base related to effective instructional practice has provided a strong foundation for professional development, book studies, and professional conversations among district and school staff.
- Strong parent and volunteer involvement in schools supports partnership of the home and school in the educational process.
- Numerous district and school grants enable the district to more adequately meet student needs.

Limitations

- The community continues to grow in population; the district's enrollment has grown by an average of 1300 students per year over the past five years.
- The population of students whose first language is other than English has dramatically increased in recent years from 631 in 2002 to 5652 in 2008.
- The increase in the poverty rate among Greenville County students over the past five years has resulted in increased need for services.
- Technology continues to evolve at a rapid rate and become obsolete quickly.
- The state funding structure and formula under which education is funded in South Carolina is inadequate to meet the needs of districts and schools.

Major Strengths

Several major strengths emerge from the district's Standards Review:

- Clear focus on student achievement,
 - The strategic planning process is systemic across the district.
 - The District Strategic Plan outlines five goal areas; the first and primary goal focuses on student achievement; the other four goals support goal 1.
 - The school portfolio process mirrors the district process; school and teacher goals are aligned to district goals.
 - Personnel evaluation systems are aligned with strategic plan goals.
 - Budget planning process is aligned with and reflects the strategic plan goals.

Executive Summary of School System Profile

- The district's 12-member Board of Trustees is unified in its focus on student performance and unanimous in its support of visionary programs to support and enhance quality teaching and learning.
- Human Resource systems effectively promote recruitment, induction, development, retention, and evaluation of personnel. 97.6% of the district's core academic teachers are Highly Qualified under the guidelines of No Child Left Behind.
- Advocacy and support for GCS from business leaders and community citizens promote and strengthen the district's continuous improvement efforts.
- State-of-the-art facilities support quality teaching and learning.
- Technology systems support and enhance teaching, learning, and school/district operations.
- The analysis and effective use of data guide instructional planning and school/district operations.

Challenges

The major challenges facing the district include the following:

- Increase the graduation rate as defined by South Carolina guidelines.
- Support and expand multiple pathways to high school completion.
- Close the achievement gap between students receiving subsidized and non-subsidized meals.
- Expand early intervention strategies to promote increased student achievement.
- Advocate for increased funding for 4K programs.
- Advocate for a change in the structure and formula under which K-12 education is funded in South Carolina.





Section 2

Standards Review

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report



Standard 1

Vision and Purpose

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report

Standard 1: Vision and Purpose

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



Impact Statement

A system is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a purpose and direction that is shared system-wide. The leadership establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the system's vision that is supported by system and school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and district effectiveness. The system's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.



	INDICATORS In fulfillment of this standard, the system:	NE	E	O	HF
1.1	Establishes a vision and purpose for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders				X
1.2	Communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support				X
1.3	Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision				X
1.4	Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community				X
1.5	Ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services				X
1.6	Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate				X
	<i>Key - NE - Not Evident • E - Emerging • O - Operational • HF - Highly Functional</i>				

Not Evident
Emerging

Little or no evidence exists
Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice

Operational
Highly Functional

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Focus Questions

1. What is the process for establishing and building understanding of and commitment to the vision statement among the school system and its stakeholders?

The District Education (Strategic) Plan was originally developed in 1999 by a group of 60 individuals, including elected officials, corporate leaders, parents, principals, teachers, district staff, and other community members, under the direction of the Superintendent. The plan is grounded in the district's philosophy, defines overall district direction, guides district and school priorities, and serves as the basis of human, financial, and operational decisions. The plan articulates a clear mission, vision, and set of beliefs that serve as the plan's foundation.

Beliefs

We believe

- *All students can learn.*
- *Students are the center of the educational process.*
- *Students learn best in a safe, orderly, and inviting environment.*
- *Students should have competent teachers, principals, and support personnel.*
- *Parents' involvement and volunteer services support and enhance the teaching and learning process.*
- *Students should have equal access to educational opportunities.*
- *Students have the responsibility to be active learners.*
- *Curriculum and instruction should meet the needs of all students.*
- *Educational experiences should enable students to communicate effectively, solve problems competently, think critically and creatively, and act responsibly.*
- *Education is the shared responsibility of home, school, and community.*



Mission

We provide educational experiences, in cooperation with the home and community, that prepare students for life-long learning and for ethical, productive participation in a democratic society and the global community.

Vision

To become an exemplary school district in which every child achieves to his or her maximum ability through a rigorous, engaging curriculum and systems of support that cultivate the potential and promote the well-being of every individual child.

The District Strategic Plan outlines five performance goals; goal 1 is intended as the priority goal, with goals 2-5 intended to support goal 1.

Goal 1: Raise the academic challenge and performance of each student.

Goal 2: Ensure quality personnel in all positions.

Goal 3: Provide a school environment supportive of learning.

Goal 4: Effectively manage and further develop necessary financial resources.

Goal 5: Improve public understanding and support of public schools.

Each of the goals is supported by a series of objectives, key strategies and benchmarks through which progress can be measured.

The most recent plan update was conducted in the spring of 2008 and included the following stakeholder groups: the district executive leadership team, principal representatives, teacher representatives, district staff representatives, school PTA presidents, district PTA officers and corporate/community leaders. A review of the plan framework, goals, objectives and progress indicators was provided for each group and participants were given the opportunity for dialogue, feedback and input. The revised plan was reviewed by the district's Board of Trustees at its June Committee of the Whole meeting and formally approved at the Board meeting in August.

The analysis of assessment data is a key component of the planning process. Directly related to the strategic planning process are the district's comprehensive, data-based performance assessment systems for principals (PAS-A), teachers (PAS-T), and Instructional Coaches (PAS-IC). Each system has been designed based on a series of performance standards proven through research to define effective school leadership.

Each school also participates in the annual strategic planning process. The unit of analysis at the school level is the school portfolio, consisting of a demographic profile of the school, a data-based academic needs assessment, identification of desired academic outcomes, an action plan and professional development plan for achieving outcomes, and a plan for measuring results.

The Assistant Superintendents for Principal Supervision and School Accountability meet regularly with each principal to review and discuss student achievement data and the goals and action plans for the year. School goals are reviewed for alignment with the goals and strategies outlined in the District Strategic Plan and for effectiveness in addressing identified school needs. The PAS-A process promotes and fosters the district's focus on continuous improvement. The PAS-T and PAS-IC are based on a similar process that is conducted within each individual school.

The district's comprehensive Long-Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program, also reviewed and updated regularly, enables the district to support quality teaching and learning through the construction and maintenance of state-of-the-art educational facilities and through effective planning for changing enrollment patterns and continued growth in the student population.

2. What is the system's process for maintaining and using information that describes the school system, its programs, services, and schools and their performance?

The district maintains a comprehensive profile of the system, the students, and the community through the combined efforts of the departments of Education Technology Services; Research, Evaluation and Accountability; Planning/Demographics; and Communications. Data are maintained electronically and are available at both the district and school levels. Student data are maintained through the state-required SASI system and include individual and group demographics; a summary of achievement outcomes of the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT), High School Assessment Program (HSAP), End-of-Course (EOC) assessments; and non-achievement data related to attendance, discipline, and drop-outs. A comprehensive student locator system enables effective management of students' school assignments, the district's school-choice program, and the bus transportation system. The district's Assistant to the Superintendent for Information Assurance is beginning to centralize the district's record systems.

3. How does the leadership ensure that the system's vision, purpose, and goals guide the work of the school system and its schools?

The district promotes focus on and accountability for results through a variety of structures and strategies:

- Five Assistant Superintendents for Principal Supervision and School Accountability are assigned the primary responsibility of providing leadership to the improvement of teaching, learning, and student achievement in the schools for which they are responsible.
- Assistant Superintendents monitor the implementation of student achievement goal strategies through school and classroom visits and consultation with principals.
- Regular meetings with principals, instructional coaches, assistant principals, lead teachers, and other staff groups promote a focus on results.
- Improvement models (e.g., High Schools That Work, Making Middle Grades Work, Quality Tools initiative) are in place to monitor instructional program effectiveness.
- Collaboration and professional dialogues related to improved student achievement are promoted at the district and school levels through vertical and horizontal articulation.
- The school portfolio process is designed to promote and support continuous improvement; portfolios are evaluated and updated annually.
- Principals and teachers annually develop specific, measurable student achievement goals based on demonstrated growth needs; goals are considered as a part of each individual's evaluation.

4. What process is used to ensure that the vision and purpose of the school system remain current and aligned with the system's expectations in support of student learning and the effectiveness of the school system and its schools?

The Superintendent's Leadership Retreat each summer, attended by principals and district staff, sets the tone for the upcoming school year. The theme for the 2008 retreat was Strengthening Our Roots: Leadership for Continuous Improvement and was grounded in the precept that *there are two lasting bequests that we can give our children. One is roots; the other is wings.* After five years of program expansion and enhancement, the district's focus for 2008-09 is strengthening and continuously improving programs currently in place before considering major new initiatives.

Members of the Superintendent's Executive Team establish yearly priorities, based on the District Strategic Plan and the theme designated by the Superintendent to guide the work of their staffs. Department priority initiatives are shared with the Executive Team. Individual school goals, also aligned with the District Strategic Plan, are established in conjunction with the school portfolio process.

District and school goals and expectations are communicated and reviewed with School Improvement Councils at their monthly meetings, with PTA members at regularly scheduled meetings, through frequently published district and school newsletters, through student-led parent conferences at International Baccalaureate and Baldrige schools, and through parent/teacher conferences at other schools.

The district communicates the system's vision, purpose, expectations, and results-related information, both internally and externally, in a variety of formats:

- School Report Cards, published by the state of South Carolina, are sent to parents and other stakeholders annually.
- Schools develop and publish community reports and newsletters; many teachers prepare and disseminate weekly/monthly newsletters to parents; as a requirement of the PAS-T evaluation system, teachers have classroom websites that focus on teaching, learning, and student achievement.
- The district's internal e-management memo, organized around the Strategic Plan goals, is delivered weekly to administrators throughout the district.
- An annual Progress Update, highlighting the five goals of the Strategic Plan, is published and posted on the district's website.
- The district website and the parent portal are updated regularly to keep parents, the general community, and employees informed about the district's vision, goals, progress and needs.
- The district's 24-hour cable channel broadcasts programs that highlight the district's vision, goals, progress and needs.
- Public meetings/presentations are held regularly to inform school faculty and staff, parents, students, legislators, and community members of district progress.
- The Superintendent hosts four community breakfast events yearly to discuss student achievement results and district challenges/priorities.

- The Superintendent meets regularly with Teacher Forum, students (through the Inter-High Council), business leaders, and PTA representatives to discuss the district’s vision and goals and to receive input/ feedback from those in attendance.
- The Superintendent publishes columns in The Greenville News, highlighting recent accomplishments and topics of interest, all related to the district’s vision for student performance.

EVIDENCE

<p>1.1 Establishes a vision and purpose for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • School Portfolios • District/School Title I Plans • Meeting Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Principals - Teacher Forum - SIC/PTA
<p>1.2 Communicates the system’s vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-Management Memo • e-Bulletin Board • District/School/Teacher Websites • Schools Channel Program Archives • Parent Portal • Newsletters • District/School Report Card narratives • Reports to the Community • Superintendent’s Columns • News Release Archives • VIP e-News
<p>1.3 Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • School Portfolios • District/School Title I Plans • Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Principals

EVIDENCE

<p>1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District and School Report Cards • School Portfolios • Title I Plan • SASI database • Planning/Demographics databases • Long Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program
<p>1.5 Ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Leadership Retreat - Executive Team - Principals - Teacher Forum - SIC/PTA • Yearly Strategic Plan Priorities
<p>1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Leadership Retreat - Executive Team - Principals - Teacher Forum - SIC/PTA





Standard 2
***Governance
and Leadership***

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report



Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

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



Impact Statement

A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the system'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 function with clearly defined authority and responsibility and encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for system and school improvement among stakeholders. The system's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

INDICATORS In fulfillment of this standard, the system operates under the jurisdiction of a governing authority that:		NE	E	O	HF
2.1	Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system				X
2.2	Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system				X
2.3	Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations				X
2.4	Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board				X
2.5	Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources			X	
<i>Key - NE - Not Evident • E - Emerging • O - Operational • HF - Highly Functional</i>					

Not Evident
Emerging

Little or no evidence exists
Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice

Operational
Highly Functional

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS In fulfillment of this standard, the system operates under the jurisdiction of a governing authority that:		NE	E	O	HF
2.6	Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations				X
2.7	Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations				X
In fulfillment of this standard, the system has leadership that:					
2.8	Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness				X
2.9	Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs				X
2.10	Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals				X
2.11	Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership				X
2.12	Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction			X	
2.13	Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel			X	
Key - NE - Not Evident • E - Emerging • O - Operational • HF - Highly Functional					

Not Evident
Emerging

Little or no evidence exists
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Operational
Highly Functional

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Focus Questions

1. What is the process for establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school system and its schools?

The Board of Trustees of Greenville County Schools is an elected body. Their mission is to ensure excellence in the governance of a quality educational program by analyzing needs, establishing policies, allocating resources, and monitoring progress.

Mission Statement...Board of Trustees, Greenville County Schools

The district's 12-member Board of Trustees, elected from single-member districts, meets twice monthly to fulfill its governance and oversight roles. Major attention is given to student performance and district progress at each meeting. The Board meets as a Committee of the Whole (COW) for a full day on the second Tuesday of each month; a formal Board meeting is held on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

Meeting agendas, developed collaboratively by a rotating committee of 3 Board members and the Superintendent with input from district staff, are aligned to the five strategic plan goal areas. The initial section of each COW meeting is focused on student achievement and allows district leaders and school representatives to share student performance outcomes and to discuss instructional programs and issues. As a result of this process, Board members are better able to gauge the impact of their decisions on the classroom. Through an electronic system entitled Boarddocs, <http://www.boarddocs.com/sc/greenville/Board.nsf>, Board members and the general public have electronic access to agendas and all related materials in advance of Board meetings. Agendas and minutes are posted on the district website. Summaries of minutes are distributed to 1300 Very Informed Persons (VIPs) across the district.

The Board of Trustees governs through comprehensive policies that provide clear direction to district processes, procedures, and activities. District policies are closely aligned to and reflect model policies developed and supported by the South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA). District policies can be accessed online through the district's website.

Board policy clearly outlines the process whereby new policies can be developed and adopted and current policies can be modified. Policies are reviewed regularly for compliance with federal and state legal mandates and requirements.

The district employs a full-time Staff Attorney who advises and supports the Board, the Superintendent, and district staff in legal matters. He is responsible for directing and coordinating the activities of all external firms employed by the district to provide assistance in specific legal matters, to confer with district and school leaders as legal issues or questions arise, and to provide professional development to district and school staff on changes in the law, specific legal requirements, or other legal matters. The Staff Attorney confers and collaborates as needed with other school attorneys throughout the state. Although district policies have been regularly reviewed and updated to assure compliance with new or revised federal, state, or local mandates,

some policies are outdated in language or in references to an outdated district organizational structure. The Staff Attorney is currently conducting an extensive review of all policies and will recommend revisions as appropriate.

The Board acts proactively to ensure that sufficient resources are available to support the implementation of the District Strategic Plan. A major example of the Board's advocacy for children is its recent filing of a friendly lawsuit to clarify the district's authority to increase its property-tax millage rate for school operations. The court ruled in the district's favor, holding that the district is subject to the general statewide law limiting annual millage increases (based on inflation and population growth), instead of special legislation that purported to limit the district's annual millage increases to four mills in the absence of a voter referendum. For fiscal year 2008-2009, the court's ruling affirms the district's decision to increase its millage rate by six mills, rather than four mills, resulting in about \$2 million in additional revenue.

The Superintendent's Executive Team, comprised of district administrative leaders, meets weekly to discuss issues related to the strategic plan; to establish and monitor district priorities, processes, policies, and procedures; and to address concerns as they arise. The focus is on continuous improvement. Executive Team members are responsible to share outcomes of the discussion with their staffs.

The Superintendent and district administrators meet monthly with principals, both as a total group and in small groups organized by geographic cluster, to discuss relevant issues and to hear concerns and suggestions for moving the district forward. Principals are responsible to share outcomes with their staffs.

2. What process does the system's leadership use to evaluate system effectiveness and its impact on student performance?

In the spring of 2007, the Board of Trustees held a full day retreat, facilitated by an outside consultant. Participants had the opportunity to review and reflect on their role as board members and to discuss ways to continuously improve their district governance. The Board reviews student performance data on a regular basis, including outcomes of state-mandated assessments, Advanced Placement, and SAT/ACT.

The Superintendent's annual evaluation includes a comprehensive, data-based report to the Board of the district's progress on each of the strategic plan goals. An annual Strategic Plan Progress Report, highlighting the five goal areas of the Strategic Plan, is published and posted on the district's website. The update describes student achievement outcomes based on multiple performance measures, as outlined in goal 1, and summarizes progress on the other four goals that support student achievement. Public meetings/presentations are held regularly to inform school faculty and staff, parents, students, legislators, and community members of district progress.

District evaluation instruments for administrators and teachers are designed to support and facilitate professional growth and improvement:

- Performance assessment systems are utilized for the professional staff of all schools to ensure that quality personnel are in each position.
- One third of the administrators are evaluated every year, utilizing the Performance Assessment System for Administrators (PAS-A). PAS-A is a summative evaluation system based on seven performance dimensions, including student achievement, instructional leadership, school climate, human resource management, organizational management, communication and community relations, and professionalism. Principals not scheduled for the PAS-A participate in an annual evaluation process.
- One third of the instructional coaches are evaluated each year using the Performance Assessment System for Instructional Coaches, structured in a similar manner.
- The Human Resources Evaluation Office formally evaluates approximately 520 teachers each year using a three-person evaluation team and the Performance Assessment System for Teachers (PAS-T). The PAS-T is based on eight performance dimensions, including student achievement, professionalism, communication, learning environment, assessment, instructional delivery, instructional planning and knowledge of curriculum and content.
- The PAS-T instrument is also used to evaluate one third of the continuing contract teachers in each school every year, under a cyclical review system that promotes continuous improvement.
- An evaluation system has been developed for use with district professional and support staff as well as classified staff district-wide and will be piloted in 2008-09.
- At district direction, each school implements a system of documented classroom observations by the school staff that provide written feedback for teachers.
- There is a monitored expectation that school and district administrators will observe regularly in classes and provide frequent feedback to teachers.
- Academic audits, directed by district staff and conducted in selected schools, provide data-based recommendations for strengthening teaching and learning in the school.
- The district's Office of Closing the Gap provides intensive support to the improvement of teaching, learning, and student achievement in elementary schools in which the gap in achievement levels between students receiving subsidized and non-subsidized meals exceeds a data-based, district-established benchmark.
- District staff direct and support the effective use of assessment data at the school level through a variety of initiatives and activities including:
 - Implementation of PAS-A (Performance Assessment System for Administrators)
 - Implementation of PAS-T (Performance Assessment System for Teachers)
 - Implementation of PAS-IC (Performance Assessment System for Instructional Coaches)
 - The development of common assessments for use at the school level to promote rigor and ensure standards alignment
 - The annual updates of district and school portfolios
- District staff directly guide and support the development and implementation of school Title I and Technical Assistance plans.

In the spirit of innovation and continuous improvement, the district conducts program evaluations to insure effective program implementation. New programs or initiatives are approved for implementation only after careful consideration of the research base in which the program is grounded, the development and approval of an implementation plan, and a defined process for evaluating program effectiveness. Initiatives or programs are formatively evaluated on an ongoing basis, with a formal evaluation conducted after three years of implementation. Formal evaluations include both process measures and attention to impact on student achievement.

During the 2007-08 school year, the district conducted a comprehensive review of the magnet school program, which began in 1995-96 as a student assignment initiative intended to reinvigorate student enrollment and facilitate racial balance in the downtown schools and to relieve overcrowded suburban schools. About to enter its fourteenth year of implementation, the program has continued to evolve as one vehicle through which the district affords choice options to students and their parents. This focus helps to accommodate individual student talents, abilities, needs, and interests.

Initially implemented in seven schools, the program was intentionally phased in over several years to include a total of 12 schools, four at each instructional level. Each school provides a unique or specialized curriculum or educational approach. Areas of focus include communication arts; foreign languages; global studies; science, mathematics, and technology; health professions; and pre-engineering.

Guided by six questions of interest, the review focused on the effectiveness of the school's specific program emphasis, the school's ability to attract students from outside its defined attendance area, the effect of the magnet program on the school's socioeconomic level, the effectiveness and budget impact of program implementation, and, most importantly, the program's impact on the achievement of students in the school.

The review included both quantitative and qualitative data. Study conclusions indicated that the district's magnet program is meeting the goals for which it was established, that it continues to be a vital component of the student assignment process and is a strong catalyst for choice in the district; and that it is promoting diversity and improved school-level achievement throughout the district.

It is notable that Hollis Academy, a magnet school that offered a Year-Round Education Program for 12 years, was the subject of a separate review during the 2007-08 school year. As a result of the review, the Administration recommended that the year-round program at Hollis be discontinued, effective in 2008-09.

Respective levels of the International Baccalaureate Program are offered in four feeder groups, geographically dispersed throughout the county. The International Baccalaureate Program is being formally evaluated this school year. Also being formally evaluated during the current school year are the district's guidance program/services and the effectiveness of the instructional coaches in supporting student learning.

3. In what ways are stakeholders, including system and school staff, given opportunities to provide leadership and to contribute to the decision-making process?

Board members are visible and actively involved in leadership roles at both the local and state levels in a variety of ways:

- Board members regularly attend national and state conferences, including the annual SCSBA Legislative Conference and the National School Boards Association Conference, and participate in Board development programs sponsored by the South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA).
- Two Board members currently serve on the SCSBA Board of Directors; one serves as Board president. Another Board member serves as president-elect of the National Parent Teacher Association.
- Board representatives are assigned as liaisons to community initiatives and agencies that collaborate with the district, including the Alliance for Quality Education, Communities-in-Schools, and Vision 2025. The Board chair is a member of the Board of Directors of Greenville Technical College.
- The Board has established a formal advocacy committee that meets regularly with members of the Legislative Delegation to discuss issues of interest to the district. The district's Coordinator of Governmental Relations assists with these efforts.
- Board members establish, lead, and participate in ad hoc committees formed to address specific issues, such as student discipline and student assignment appeals.

The agenda for each board meeting provides opportunity for public comment, during which members of the general public can voice opinions about district-related issues, school services, and instructional programs. Individuals are allowed three minutes to speak and, although the Board does not respond to the comments at that time, each speaker subsequently meets with or receives a response from a district administrator addressing the concern, question, or suggestion.

Teachers are given opportunities for leadership through a variety of forums:

- Teachers serve as grade level/subject area lead teachers and/or as members of their school's leadership team.
- Teachers serve as mentors for induction teachers and experienced teachers new to their schools.
- Teachers provide recommendations for instructional improvement through their involvement in district/school focus groups.
- Teachers participate in annual surveys designed to determine their most significant needs.
- The school portfolio process allows all teachers to be actively engaged in school improvement.
- An active Teacher Forum enables teacher leaders to provide input and feedback to the Superintendent on a regular basis.

The district engages in collaborative recruitment and hiring practices through which district staff and school leaders participate in recruitment events, assist with paper screening of applications, and serve on applicant-interview panels for district and school positions.

The district has established a committee of citizens to assist with recommendations related to the assignment of students to schools. Each Board of Trustees member appoints one citizen from his/her respective geographic area to serve on the Student Advisory Committee, which meets as needed. The committee holds public hearings at multiple locations across the district when re-assignment of neighborhoods is being considered. Citizens also participate in the district's Calendar Committee, which meets 3 or 4 times each year.

Leaders of the community, businesses, governmental entities, and community service agencies recognize the district as a leader in helping to maintain and enhance the county's quality of life. Many individuals associated with these organizations collaborate with the district to support and enhance student learning.

- A School Improvement Council at each school, comprised of parents, teachers, and community members, meets regularly to review school data and other information, to provide input to the operation of the school, and to make recommendations for improvement.
- Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) are actively involved at the school level in school-related activities, funding raising, and service as school volunteers.
- The district collaborates with various recreation groups across the county to support shared use of school athletic fields.
- Community arts organizations (museums, theaters, dance companies, symphony, Arts Council) collaborate with the district, providing artistic offerings and training to both students and teachers each year.

Parent involvement is a major ingredient of the district's focus on increasing student achievement. Parent involvement programs, in place at every school, include volunteering, serving on the school's SIC or PTA or assisting with other special projects or events. In 2007-08, 23,000 individuals donated 822,000 volunteer hours to schools in the district.

The district is especially proud of its Title I Parent Involvement Program. The program promotes parents as active teachers and collaborators with other parents and educators regarding data analysis, decision-making, and education advocacy.

Each of the district's 16 Title I schools hosts a minimum of 18 parent involvement activities and trainings yearly; some host as many as 30. Activities typically reflect content and materials supportive of academic achievement, such as literacy and numeracy; academic curriculum standards; state and local assessments; parents' rights under Title I and No Child Left Behind laws; data analysis; homework assistance; health and social services fairs; and parenting skills. While refreshments are available at the meetings, parents come for the contents.

School stakeholders--educators, parents, and community collaborators—present these topics in many formats, including Lunch and Learn; Academic Curriculum Nights; Health Fairs (Free and Reduced Lunch Services, medical and dental hygiene services, etc.); individual parent-teacher conferences to discuss state assessment results; student-led conferences; homework tips for parents; computer technology training for parents; English language instruction using traditional teaching and instructional technology software; how to conduct and participate in a teacher-parent-student conference; and many others.

Each Title I school has a dedicated space known as the “Parent Resource Room.” Within, parents may find resources that will aid them in homework help, computers to learn on and to use for developing their own resumes, for searching for employment, and even for e-mailing family in other countries. Books, brochures, journals, games, etc., are often parts of a resource room. The Title I Plan and other related documents are available for parents to review.

Greenville has a fast growing multicultural population. While a few Title I schools have small percentages of students comprising multi-cultures, most Title I schools have 20-40% Hispanic student populations. Korean, Russian, Viet Nameese, and other populations are present as well. The district’s Title I program addresses the bilingual needs of these parents through translation equipment, “Talk and Listen,” and through a bilingual staff. Most Title I schools employ a partial FTE parent involvement coordinator and/or staff who speak multi-languages to translate and interpret. All official documents are translated into the needed languages. Interpreters are available upon request for all school conferences. CompassLearning Odyssey, available now in all district K-8 schools, also has a software program available in many foreign languages to help parents and children make the transition to English.

Because of the collaboration between Title I schools and community agencies and churches, Title I facilitators are able to collect 100% of School-Parent Compacts required under Title I law. The Compact is an agreement among teacher, parent, student, and principal to promote that student’s achievement in school. Compacts are signed at parent conferences or through a visit of a Title I staff member to the student’s home. This activity promotes dialogue among stakeholders about the importance of school and of student achievement. As a result of these efforts, educators have seen rising achievement among Hispanic students and improved achievement in all Title I schools.

Finally, parents exercise their rights to choose Choice and Supplemental Education Services (SES) among targeted Title I schools. Parents in Greenville typically prefer SES academic assistance. In 2007-08, GCS had the largest SES program in South Carolina with approximately 1,250 contracts for vendor- provided services. In 2008-09, Title I will sponsor nine “fairs” throughout the Title I school areas for about 21 vendors and almost 5,500 parents. The district anticipates between 1,400-1,500 contracts, selected by parents.

4. What policies and processes are in place to ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation?

Human, material, and financial resources are allocated to schools equitably, based on established allocation formulas. Formulas are established to align to strategic plan goals and to comply with Board policy and federal and state mandates.

The BEST (Building Equity Sooner for Tomorrow) building program, now in its final completion stages, reflects the district’s commitment to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students. BEST represents the largest school facilities building program in the history of South Carolina. The program, begun in 2002, was made possible through a unique financing structure that allowed significant replacement of existing sub-par facilities and the construction of new and/or expanded facilities to accommodate growth needs through 2010 with no annual millage impact to taxpayers. As a result of the BEST program, 69 newly constructed or

renovated schools have been dedicated in the past five years. The district's comprehensive Long Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program guides planning for future facility needs based on student growth projections and educational programming changes.

The Board of Trustees actively supports the district's school choice plan. About 12% of students attend a school other than the school to which they are assigned by exercising one of several choice options available to them and their parents. Among the choice options are the International Baccalaureate Program, offered in four geographically-based feeder patterns throughout the district, a specifically focused magnet school program, choice exercised under the guidelines of No Child Left Behind, or request for change in assignment available under district guidelines. It is important to note that with the exception of Southside High School, out-of-attendance area students are accepted at International Baccalaureate schools only when space is available. Attending one of four district career centers located throughout the district is an available option for high school students. To insure equitable learning opportunities for all students, transportation is provided by the district for students who attend a "choice" school. Students who request and are granted a change in assignment must provide their own transportation.

Sterling School is the district's only "total choice" school. Sterling offers a program for highly gifted students in grades 3 through 8 and a challenging, rigorous instructional program for students in kindergarten through grade 2.

Seven public charter schools serve approximately 1400 students in Greenville County. Recently, an ad hoc committee of the Board collaborated with local charter schools to ensure, through discussions with State officials, that the charter schools receive funding for which they qualify at the beginning of the school year.

The district promotes innovation and quality classroom practice through a variety of support initiatives:

- A district planning tool (Learning Focused Schools process) guides teaching practices in all classrooms.
- A district electronic curriculum guide supports the Learning Focused Schools planning model to promote quality instruction and effective assessment.
- Data derived from Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), an assessment system initially implemented by the district in 2005 and administered in grades 2-9, helps to diagnose student academic strengths and weaknesses and inform instructional planning.
- District-developed instructional support documents, such as pacing guides and lesson plans that reflect state standards, are available electronically to school staff to promote effective instruction and optimal use of instructional time.
- Technology is available to support quality instruction in all schools (e.g., Promethean Boards, science/engineering labs, Compass Learning, Curriculum Connection, graphing calculators, laptop initiative).

EVIDENCE	
2.1 Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Policy • Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Principals - Teacher Forum - SIC/PTA • Assistant Superintendents' periodic updates to principals • e-Management Memo
2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Policy • Performance Evaluations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Superintendent - Principals
2.3 Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Financial Audits • Federal/State Audits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Title I - Title II - Title III - Procurement - IDEIA • Required safety training • Required ethics training
2.4 Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Member Certification Credits • New Board Member Orientation
2.5 Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Meeting Agendas • Collaborative Budget Process • Meetings with Legislative Delegation • Superintendent Columns

EVIDENCE	
2.6 Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Attorney position allocated and filled • Staff Attorney Job Description
2.7 Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance Policy Documents
2.8 Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent’s Evaluation Report to the Board • District Strategic Plan Updates • School Portfolio Updates • Analysis of Individual and group achievement data • PAS-A and PAS-T • Meeting Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Principals - SIC/PTA • Internal Audits
2.9 Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Principals - Teacher Forum - SIC/PTA - Alliance for Quality Education - Graduate Greenville - Vision 2025 - Student Assignment Advisory Committee

EVIDENCE	
2.10 Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Alignment to District Strategic Plan Goals • Disaggregated Student Performance Data • PAS-A • PAS-T • School Portfolios
2.11 Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Principals - Teacher Forum - SIC/PTA - Title I - Calendar Committee - Student Assignment Committee
2.12 Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas and Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Student Assignment Committee - Board ad hoc Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charter Schools - Student Discipline - Student Assignment Appeals
2.13 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAS-A • PAS-T • District and School Professional Development Plans



Standard 3
***Teaching
and Learning***

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report



Standard 3: Teaching and Learning

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



Impact Statement

A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The system ensures that teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process; provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations; and give students feedback to improve their performance.

INDICATORS In fulfillment of this standard, the system:		NE	E	O	HF
3.1	Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly- defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills				X
3.2	Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning				X
3.3	Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels				X
3.4	Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice				X
3.5	Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity			X	
3.6	Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning				X
3.7	Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment			X	
3.8	Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning				X
3.9	Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning				X
3.10	Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals				X
3.11	Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction			X	
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Operational
Highly Functional

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Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Focus Questions

1. How does the system ensure the alignment and articulation of curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments in support of the expectations for student learning?

The district's teaching/learning process is designed to be standards-based, challenging and rigorous, to reflect a commitment to equity, to demonstrate an appreciation of diversity, and to support high expectations for students and staff. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned with each other and focused on student achievement. The district's goal is to educate the whole child in a quality learning environment.

The district offers programs to meet a wide variety of student abilities, talents, interests, and needs, including programs to support the academically and artistically gifted, students in need of enhanced academic assistance, and students with disabilities.

The Charles Townes Center for the Highly Gifted serves the district's most academically able students; other academically capable students are served through the district's gifted/talented program, available in every school. Elementary programs offer a pullout program for identified students in grade three, four and five. In middle schools, identified students are served in special English classes and have the opportunity to take English I Honors in eighth grade. Identified GTA students are served in honors classes at the high school level. Presently, 13,361 students are identified as Academically Gifted and Talented. These students represent 28% of the student population in grades three through twelve.

All high schools offer a minimum of two Advanced Placement courses. Students are screened for AP course eligibility based on PSAT and SAT scores, past courses taken, and teacher recommendation. All college-bound students are encouraged to take at least one AP course during high school. In 2007-2008, the district offered 170 Advanced Placement courses across the district's 14 high schools; 2,803 students took a total of 4,965 Advanced Placement Examinations; and just over 50% earned scores of 3 or higher.

Each high school has the opportunity to engage in academic competitions within the county and region. For the past 27 years, GCS high school teams, composed primarily of juniors and seniors, have sent the winner of "Super Saturday Scholastic Scoreboard" to national competitions.

For students who are in need of enhanced academic assistance, the district offers several program options:

- Alternative programs are available for middle and high school students who are unsuccessful in the regular classroom.
- STAR Academy offers a unique instructional setting that enables overage middle school students to accelerate their learning and graduate with their peers.
- The Teen Parent Program provides opportunities for pregnant girls to stay in school through their pregnancies.
- Twilight School, Virtual School, and credit recovery options encourage students to stay in school.
- Summer school programs are designed to meet a variety of student needs.
- A comprehensive Life-long Learning Program supports adult education, workforce development, and GED preparation.

Students with disabilities are served through the district’s special education program. The most severely disabled students attend the district’s model program at Washington Center.

The district’s population of students whose first language is a language other than English has grown substantially in the past six years, from 631 students in 2002 to 5652 students in 2008-09. These students, most of whom are Hispanic and many of whom are Limited English Proficient, are served programmatically in accordance with state guidelines. The district publishes and distributes Spanish versions of various documents and publications to meet the needs of and facilitate the involvement of Spanish-speaking families in the community.

The district’s curriculum is grounded in the South Carolina academic standards for kindergarten through grade 12 and the South Carolina Good Start, Grow Smart standards for pre-kindergarten. The standards define expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills. The district’s teaching and learning consultants, in collaboration with classroom teachers, develop and maintain the electronic Curriculum Connection on the district’s electronic portal as a resource for classroom teachers. State standards, support documents, and curricular units are posted in the Curriculum Connection. Each unit contains embedded guidance for instruction. The district provides targeted professional development sessions to address curriculum standards and indicators which impact student learning. An electronic lesson planner supports teachers in their instructional planning efforts.

Curriculum for all Career/Technology Education courses is based on state-defined competencies developed and reviewed by members of the business community as well as teachers of the courses. The competencies are based on the knowledge and skills that a student is expected to demonstrate in a given course. Course competencies and associated curricula are evaluated regularly based on current workplace needs. Mastery of these competencies gives students an advantage in the workplace and prepares them to continue their study at the post-secondary level. Students are encouraged to enroll in Career/Technology courses that are considered “non-traditional” for their gender.

Student learning is assessed through the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT), Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), the High School Assessment Program (HSAP), and End-of-Course (EOC) tests, all of which are aligned to the state standards. The content areas of modern and classical languages, visual and performing arts, and physical education utilize state-level program assessments to measure program quality. Common assessments are used at the middle and high school levels to promote common and rigorous expectations for all students.

A data-driven approach to instructional planning is a priority at both the district and school levels. Many schools emphasize data-driven processes through creation of “data walls” or other structures that provide a vehicle for professional, data-based conversations among school faculty about student learning. Data resulting from MAP assessments are particularly significant and helpful in this context. MAP is a formative assessment system administered to students in grades two through nine each fall and spring, with an optional winter administration window. Because the system is aligned to the South Carolina academic standards, district and school personnel are able to identify each student’s individual strengths and areas in need of improvement and to differentiate instruction accordingly.

The district articulates content curriculum across grade levels to ensure mastery of fundamental standards and skills necessary to advance to the next level. Articulation is demonstrated through curricular design posted on the Curriculum Connection. Content consultants collaborate with each other and with teachers, promoting opportunities for interdisciplinary integration. The district conducts annual reviews of curriculum with assistance from select classroom teachers. Curriculum reviews may also be generated by updates to the state curriculum standards.

The competencies in Career/Technology Education are reviewed and revised on a regular basis by teachers of the respective courses and representatives of the business community state-wide. The addition or deletion of competencies is based on skills and knowledge needed in the workplace. Local advisory committees in each program area offer suggestions on the local courses that are no longer relevant to this community/region as well as suggestions on topics/areas that need to be integrated into particular courses.

The district offers Career/Technology Education dual credit courses, whereby students are able to receive college credit with Greenville Technical College, in addition to Carnegie credit. The district's agreement with Greenville Tech helps students begin post-secondary education while still in high school, more easily finance a college education, and complete a career/technology program at Greenville Tech earlier than students who matriculate through the regular program. In 2007-08, over 40% of the Career/Technology students enrolled in dual credit courses successfully earned dual credit through Greenville Tech.

2. In what ways does the system promote and support the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that facilitate achievement for all students?

On the Curriculum Connection, the district incorporates units of study based on the Learning Focused instructional model. This research-based model promotes student collaboration, inquiry and purposeful use of higher order thinking skills. This model connects the content areas and "real world" work experiences with appropriate hands-on activities.

The district guides teachers in the effective use of instructional tools that engage students and support learning, such as science inquiry kits, Calendar Math, math manipulatives, primary documents, and units of integrated content study.

Best practices are based not only in empirical data but also in research-based study of student achievement. To **support teachers and students, the district:**

- Analyzes data from MAP, PACT, HSAP, EOC, and NAEP testing
- Offers Freshman Academy programs that provide academic and social support for ninth graders at various schools across the district.
- Offers single-gender classrooms in a number of elementary, middle, and high schools across the district.
- Writes grants for instructional tools, small learning communities, arts instruction, and other research-based initiatives
- Trains school instructional coaches in data analysis and the effective use of outcomes for instructional planning
- Screens instructional software products for local school purchase and posts approved products on the district website
- Provides elementary reading, writing, and mathematics benchmarks
- Conducts local school audits to identify strengths and weaknesses in instructional methodology
- Conducts classroom observations and confers with teachers to improve instruction
- Conducts model (demonstration) lessons in school classrooms
- Provides professional development on research-based best practices
- Trains and supports the use of the Learning Focused model for instructional delivery
- Designs and maintains curricular units on the Curriculum Connection
- Administers five child development centers that provide 4K, preschool special education, and family learning programs
- Offers 71 full-day PreK (4K) programs for at-risk children based on academic/developmental delays, low family income, and low education level in 30 classrooms housed in district Child Development Centers and in 41 classes located in elementary schools
- Offers preschool special education programming based on a continuum of need (full-day self-contained to consultation in private day care) for children ages three to five identified as having a disability and in need of special education services
- Offers middle and high school alternative programs to meet student needs, including Virtual High School and Credit Recovery.

3. What processes are implemented to ensure that all staff members are well prepared to support and implement the district's expectations for student learning?

The district provides professional development for teachers, instructional coaches and other staff to support the teaching/learning process. Recent areas of focus include single gender education, instructional differentiation, teaching children in poverty, reading interventions, early childhood instruction/intervention, strategies for promoting diversity within the classroom, effective instructional strategies for at-risk students, arts integration, and the selection of commercial instructional programs. Professional development on the Learning Focused Model is ongoing.

Because protecting instructional time is a district priority, the district provides a variety of settings for professional development outside the school day, including designated in-service days, after-school seminars and workshops, and an extensive summer academy for teachers.

Career/Technology Education teachers are supported at all levels by career specialists in the Office of Career Technology Education. The career specialists visit classrooms, answer questions concerning the curriculum, conduct workshops and seminars for teachers, and provide other assistance as requested.

Professional development opportunities at the school level are aligned to those sponsored by the district and focus on district initiatives as well as specific school needs. Data-driven professional conversations among teachers as well as book studies are among the frequently used professional development strategies in schools.

4. How does the system ensure that all students and staff have access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services?

The district promotes a supportive climate for student learning through regular meetings and written communication with designated contacts at each school. Monthly meetings and/or newsletters are disseminated to elementary school content contacts, middle and high school content department chairs, and instructional coaches at all levels.

Teaching and Learning Consultants collaborate regularly with the Coordinator of Media Services and the Director of Instructional Technology to promote effective classroom instruction. All teachers are required to demonstrate technology proficiency every five years by completing at least 30 hours in technology integration instruction. Promethean Boards are currently in classrooms all over the district with the goal of expanding them to every classroom in the next few years.

Because of the district's available technology, all 4th grade students in the district participate annually in a video conferencing Astronomy lesson provided by Roper Mountain Science Center through their elementary science labs. Teachers and students from middle and high schools work in collaboration with Roper Mountain Science Center to create learning exhibitions that provide quality learning experiences for the community through the "Second Saturday" programs.

All Title I classrooms have either Promethean or Smart Boards. Instructional technology specialists supplement the district's other technology resources to provide ongoing professional development to Title I teachers.

Resources are designed by the Teaching and Learning and Instructional Technology Departments that help teachers engage students in content through the use of the Promethean Board. The collaboration is evident in the Curriculum Connection where references are made to resources housed at the Robbie Van Pelt Instructional Materials Center, to instructional technology software, or to kits housed at the Science Materials Center. Curricular units also include embedded links to websites, Promethean flipcharts, streaming videos, music, visual and graphic illustrations and electronic literary texts. Workshops are offered periodically on how to use the materials housed in the Instructional Materials Center.

The district supports a Science Materials Center, centrally located in the county. It is staffed with two professional employees who receive, refurbish, and redistribute science kits to all elementary and middle school teachers on a rotating basis.

The online student registration system (SRS), developed by the district’s web development team, has been in place since 2004. SRS allows parents and students, from rising 6th graders through rising 12th graders, to request elective and related arts courses for the next school year from home via the Internet. Families who do not have access to the Internet are given opportunities to use school computers to register online. SRS is supported by the district-developed, online, searchable database of course offerings called the Master Catalog. This catalog of state and district approved course offerings is an easily-accessed, transparent venue for sharing with teachers, schools, parents and communities the diverse and rich curricula available in our district and schools.

EVIDENCE

<p>3.1 Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly-defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • School Portfolios • State Academic Standards • Learning Focused Model • High Schools That Work • e-Curriculum Connection • e-Lesson Planner
<p>3.2 Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • School Portfolios • State Academic Standards • Learning Focused Model • High Schools That Work • Making Middle Grades Work • e-Curriculum Connection • e-Lesson Planner
<p>3.3 Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data-driven Instructional Planning • Student Performance Data • PAS-A • PAS-T • Budget Process

EVIDENCE	
3.4 Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District and Site-Specific Staff Development Plans • e-Curriculum Connection • e-Lesson Planner • Instructional Technology Support • Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Principals - Teacher Forum - SIC/PTA
3.5 Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • School Portfolios • Learning Focused Model • High Schools That Work • Making Middle Grades Work • Title I Plan • Technology Software • MAP Formative Assessment • Academic Assistance Support • Charles Townes Center for the Highly Gifted • District reduced class size initiative for early grades • Middle and High School Alternative Programs • School Assistance Teams • Early Intervening Services
3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School/Class Schedules • District Directives • District/School Policies/Practices

EVIDENCE

<p>3.7 Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAP Formative Assessment • State-mandated Assessments • Technology Software • Vertical and Horizontal Articulation Initiatives • After-School Academic Assistance Programs aligned with Classroom Instruction • Individual Graduation Plans • IEP/504 Process • Title I Plan
<p>3.8 Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Focused Model • Title I Plan • High Schools That Work • Making Middle Grades Work • District/School Professional Development Plans • After-School Academic Assistance Programs aligned with Classroom Instruction • Individual Graduation Plans • District reduced class size initiative for early grades • Middle and High School Alternative Programs • School Assistance Teams • Early Intervening Services • Star Academy • Full day 4K programs for at-risk students • 5 Child Development Centers for 4K, preschool special education, and Family Literacy
<p>3.9 Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • e-Curriculum Connection • e-Lesson Planner • Instructional Technology Support • “Highly Qualified” staff • BEST Program • Long-Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program • Discipline Policy • Attendance Policy • Scheduling Process • Budget Process • Personnel Allocation Formulas

EVIDENCE

<p>3.10 Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • e-Curriculum Connection • e-Lesson Planner
<p>3.11 Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • Support Positions Allocated and Filled • Budget Process





Standard 4
***Documenting
and Using Results***

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report

Standard 4: Documenting and Using Results



Impact Statement

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

A school system is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly-defined performance measures. The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, to identify gaps between expectations for student learning and student performance, to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and to determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to system and school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, system and school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.



INDICATORS		NE	E	O	HF
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
4.1	Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and bias free				X
4.2	Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning				X
4.3	Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance				X
4.4	Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders				X
4.5	Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness				X
4.6	Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence				X
4.7	Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations			X	
<i>Key - NE - Not Evident • E - Emerging • O - Operational • HF - Highly Functional</i>					

Not Evident
Emerging

Little or no evidence exists
Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice

Operational
Highly Functional

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Focus Questions

1. How is the assessment system currently used throughout the school system and its schools to guide analysis of changes in student performance?

The district uses a variety of formative and summative, formal and informal assessments to measure and analyze changes in student performance. Assessments used throughout the district include four state-mandated measures: the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) in grades three through eight, the High School Assessment Program exit exam which students take for the first time in grade 10, End-of-Course Tests in selected high school subjects, and the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in state-designated grades; Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), an online formative assessment administered in grades two through nine, benchmark assessments at the elementary and middle school levels, Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Examinations, SAT, and ACT. DIAL-3, AIMSWEB, and ELDA are also administered for special purposes. PACT, the standards-based state assessment in place for the past ten years, will be replaced in the spring of 2009 with the Performance Assessment of State Standards (PASS).

School and district-level administrators can access student test data through a variety of sources. Historical data can be accessed through the district's data warehouse system, EASE-E. This application allows school and district-level administrators to review data from both holistic and disaggregated perspectives. Student data are also available through the student locator system, housed on the district's InfoWeb. Assessment data are included as part of the web-based Individual Education Plans for special-needs students.

School administrative and instructional teams, working with individual teachers, examine state and local assessment outcomes. Resulting information drives decisions about strategies that best meet individual and group instructional needs.

A data-driven approach to instructional planning is a priority at both the district and school levels. Many schools emphasize data-driven processes through creation of data walls or other structures that provide a vehicle for professional, data-based conversations about student learning among school faculty. Data resulting from MAP assessments are particularly significant and helpful in this context. MAP is a formative assessment system administered to students in grades two through nine each fall and spring, with an optional winter administration window. Because the system is aligned to the South Carolina academic standards, district and school personnel are able to identify each student's individual strengths and areas in need of improvement and to differentiate instruction accordingly.

The district uses the academic audit process to provide comprehensive evaluations of academic programs in Title I schools identified as being in levels of "School Improvement." Audits are conducted by outside experts, usually retired educators with demonstrated instructional expertise. A major component of the audit process is the collection and study of student achievement data, as well as data related to non-achievement variables such as attendance, discipline, and school climate. The district has formed a District Oversight Committee, comprised of district instructional leaders, which provides alternative governance and intense instructional and operational oversight of schools in the "Restructuring" level of school improvement. The district has deliberately designed the proactive audit process to help schools avoid a designation of "Restructuring."

Response to Intervention (RTI), a comprehensive student-centered assessment and intervention model implemented in the regular classroom, is used to identify and address individual student difficulties before referral to special education.

The analysis of assessment data is a key component of the annual strategic planning process in which the district and each school participate. The unit of analysis at the school level is the school portfolio, consisting of a demographic profile of the school, a data-based academic needs assessment, identification of desired academic outcomes, an action plan and professional development plan for achieving outcomes, and a plan for measuring results. The Assistant Superintendents for Principal Supervision and School Accountability meet regularly with each principal to review and discuss student achievement data and the goals and action plans for the year. School goals are reviewed for alignment with the goals and strategies outlined in the District Strategic Plan and for effectiveness in addressing identified school needs.

Directly related to the strategic planning process are the district's comprehensive, data-based performance assessment systems for principals (PAS-A), teachers (PAS-T), and Instructional Coaches (PAS-IC). Each system has been designed based on a series of performance dimensions proven through research to define effective school leadership. The PAS-A process promotes and fosters the district's focus on continuous improvement. The PAS-T and PAS-IC are based on a similar process and conducted within each individual school.

Thirty-one of the district's schools have been designated as Baldrige model schools. In Baldrige model schools, students are responsible for leading goal-setting conferences with their teachers and parents, and for tracking their own progress on assessments by keeping personal data notebooks and through discussions with their teachers and their peers. In addition to the Baldrige schools, other schools across the district, including Title I schools, have also implemented student-led conferences.

2. What are you doing to ensure that assessment results are timely, relevant and communicated in a way that can be used by teachers, students, parents and external stakeholders to aid the performance of individual students?

A process for communicating results of respective assessments is included in the district's overall communications plan. As outcomes of various assessments become available, the Communications Department, working with staff in Research, Evaluation, and Accountability, disseminate information in a timely manner, taking care not to breach any embargoes that may be in effect. News releases highlighting the results are generated for the district's website and for local media. Adequate Year Progress (AYP) data and South Carolina School Report Card information are communicated in a similar manner and made available to all parents and community members. Comprehensive reports are provided to the Board of Trustees at their monthly meeting following release of results. To facilitate effective communication, the district publishes an annual testing calendar that is distributed to school staff, parents, and members of the community across the district.

Disaggregated assessment results are provided to schools in a timely manner. For example, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) allows students to determine their scores immediately after completing the test. Detailed, individual student and teacher reports are available within 24 hours, and district reports are available within 2 weeks after the administration window closes. These data afford teachers the opportunity to define strengths and deficiencies of individual students in reading, language usage, mathematics, and science. Outcomes are discussed in parent/teacher conferences and/or sent to the parent.

3. How are data used to understand and improve overall effectiveness of the school system and its schools?

The district maintains a comprehensive profile of the system, the students, and the community through the combined efforts of the departments of Education Technology Services; Research, Evaluation and Accountability; Planning/Demographics; and Communications. Data are maintained electronically and are available at both the district and school levels. Student data are maintained through the state-required SASI system and include individual and group demographics; a summary of achievement outcomes of the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT), High School Assessment Program (HSAP), End-of-Course (EOC) assessments; and non-achievement data related to attendance, discipline, and drop-outs. A comprehensive student locator system enables effective management of students' school assignments, the district's school-choice program, and the bus transportation system. The district's Assistant to the Superintendent for Information Assurance is beginning to centralize the district's record systems.

Student performance data are used to make comparisons to schools and districts in South Carolina that are similar demographically to GCS. These comparisons include results of PACT, HSAP, SAT, ACT and AP exams. Disaggregated data provide information specific to gender, ethnicity, LEP status, disability status, economic status as measured by free and reduced lunch participation, and other demographic categories that can help target certain needs within specific populations.

The data warehouse, EASE-E, can be accessed to view historical student performance data. This application allows school and district-level administrators to look at certain classifications of students and specific data variables to make informed decisions about program and system effectiveness.

The district uses data to conduct on-going program and process evaluations. New programs or initiatives are approved for implementation only after careful consideration of the research base in which the program is grounded, the development and approval of an implementation plan, and a defined process for evaluating program effectiveness. Initiatives or programs are formatively evaluated on an ongoing basis, with a formal evaluation conducted after three years of implementation. Formal evaluations include both process measures and attention to impact on student achievement.

Teachers are provided time to plan, collaborate, and develop professional communities with other teachers. Teachers meet by grade level and/or subject (department) area to review and discuss assessment and accountability results, share ideas, and plan instruction to best remediate or enrich students' learning programs.

4. How are staff members across the system and its schools trained to understand and use data in the classroom?

The district actively prepares teachers and other school and district staff to understand and use data to support instructional planning and delivery through a variety of regular and ongoing professional development activities. Research, Evaluation, and Accountability Department staff provide professional development opportunities for school-based personnel on use of the data warehouse, EASE-E; understanding AYP and the state report card system; and interpreting and effectively using assessment data (MAP, HSAP, PACT). Upon request, the Research Department staff provide data presentations to faculty and administrators at schools. The workshops are designed to help teachers think about their students' test results, to review overall student progress, and to facilitate further discussion about effective classroom instruction.

Professional development opportunities are available throughout the year to help school personnel interpret and effectively use data to drive instruction and to make programmatic changes. District-level curriculum consultants provide support to this process for all core subject areas. Using an approach grounded in the effective analysis of assessment data, district leaders identify appropriate alternative teaching strategies, provide instructional materials, ideas, and techniques, and assist in determining adjustments that are needed in order to redirect instructional focus. District staff also provide ongoing professional development related to assessment, its purpose, types, and effective design. For example, in 2007-08, the district provided a year-long professional development program for instructional coaches and administrators around the theme of formative assessment.

Staff of the Title I Office provide strong support to Title I schools in the analysis and effective use of student achievement data from a variety of sources. Their work is focused primarily on interpreting and effectively using outcomes of the MAP administrations and the rich data that result. They also offer professional development in data analysis and in the use of skills and resources to drive achievement.

The Teaching and Learning Department holds regular meetings for all instructional coaches, district instructional facilitators, curriculum resource teachers and grade level chairs to discuss student performance data. The curriculum consultants in the Teaching and Learning Department train school-based leaders in the effective analysis and use of data and suggest strategies and tools to address the needs demonstrated through the analysis. The school leaders are responsible for training the teachers in their buildings how to use and interpret the data gleaned from student performance reports.

Every school in the district has been allocated either an instructional coach or a curriculum resource teacher. These curriculum leaders are in place to assist classroom teachers with the disaggregation and use of school-level data. They provide guidance and support in the form of professional development, demonstration lessons, materials, book discussions, and school portfolio development. Instructional coaches and curriculum resource teachers are the conduits through which training received from district personnel is transmitted to classroom teachers.

EVIDENCE

<p>4.1 Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid and bias free.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • School Portfolios • Reviews of state/local assessments • Staff development in data analysis • Course syllabi • e-Curriculum Connection • Teacher Lesson plans
<p>4.2 Ensures that student assessment data is used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End-of-Course - MAP • Meeting Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Assistant Superintendents - Teaching and Learning Staff - School Leadership Teams - Grade Level or Department
<p>4.3 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIAL-R • AIMSWEB • EOC • SAT • PACT • MAP • ACT • HSAP • ESOL • Common Course Assessments • Gifted/Talented Programs

EVIDENCE

<p>4.4 Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report • Local media • e-Communications • Parent Express • Parent letters • District/School Websites • School/Teacher Newsletters • Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Principals - PTA - SIC • District/School Report Cards
<p>4.5 Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PACT • EOC • AP • SAT • ACT • HSAP
<p>4.6 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AYP • District/School Report Cards • End-of-Course Tests • MAP • Benchmark testing
<p>4.7 Maintains a secure, accurate and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student cumulative records • Individualized Education Plans • Student portfolios • SASI • Student locator • Student and parent portals • Student report cards • Centralized record system



Standard 5
***Resources and
Support Systems***

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report

Standard 5: Resources and Support Systems

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



Impact Statement

A system is successful in meeting this standard when it 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 system employs and allocates staff well-qualified for their assignments. The system provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The system ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.



INDICATORS In fulfillment of this standard, the system:		NE	E	O	HF
	Human Resources				
5.1	Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities				X
5.2	Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)				X
5.3	Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff			X	
5.4	Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable				X
<i>Key - NE - Not Evident • E - Emerging • O - Operational • HF - Highly Functional</i>					

Not Evident
Emerging

Little or no evidence exists
Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice

Operational
Highly Functional

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS In fulfillment of this standard, the system:		NE	E	O	HF
Financial Resources					
5.5	Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement				X
5.6	Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures				X
Physical Resources					
5.7	Maintains sites, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment				X
5.8	Establishes and implements written security and crisis management plans with appropriate training for stakeholders				X
5.9	Implements processes and plans for maintaining and improving sites, facilities, and equipment				X
5.10	Provides technology infrastructure and equipment that is up-to-date and sufficient to accomplish the system's goals			X	
Support Systems					
5.11	Provides and coordinates support services that meet the health, counseling, nutrition, safety, co-curricular, transportation, and special learning needs of all students			X	
5.12	Provides student support services coordinated with the school, home, and community			X	
<i>Key - NE - Not Evident • E - Emerging • O - Operational • HF - Highly Functional</i>					

Not Evident

Little or no evidence exists

Operational

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented

Emerging

Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice

Highly Functional

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented



Focus Questions

1. What is the school system's process for recruitment, induction, placement, development, evaluation, and retention of qualified professional and support staff across the system and its schools?

Goal 2 of the District Strategic Plan establishes as a priority the recruitment and retention of quality teachers, administrators, and support personnel. In 2008-09, the district employs 4,944 teachers. Of those, 4,939 positions were filled prior to the opening of school, yielding a teacher employment rate of 99.9 percent. Of the district's core content teachers, 97.6% are "highly qualified" under guidelines of No Child Left Behind. This percentage leads the state, with the exception of a few very small districts. The Human Resources Department conducts periodic market analyses for administrative positions and makes adjustments as warranted.

Staff are assigned to schools in accordance with the goals/priorities established in the District Strategic Plan as well as federal and state laws and regulations, as reflected in allocation guidelines. Current allocation ratios are 1:25 for kindergarten; 1:21 for grades 1-3; 1:25 for grades 4-5; and 1:25 for middle and high schools

The district aggressively recruits highly qualified teachers via university job fairs, personal contacts, and various local fairs and initiatives. Robust district recruiting efforts include 51 recruiting events each year that allow interactions with 145 colleges and universities in 12 states.

District recruitment strategies focus on increasing staff diversity. There was a 60% increase in the number of minority teachers hired for the 2007-08 school year, as compared to 2006-07. The percentage of minority employees increased from 19% to 19.3% from 2006-07 to 2007-08. In addition, the percentage of minority principals grew from 21% in 2005-06 to 22% in 2006-07 and 22.5% in 2007-08.

The district hosts two major recruiting events each year in Greenville. In 2007-08, 108 candidates attended the Winter Graduate Reception, up from 49 the prior year; 534 candidates attended the Shining Stars event, up from 400 the prior year.

Student Teachers Achieving Results Now Seminars (STARS) are held twice yearly for student teachers. In 2007-08, over 200 student teachers attend four sessions on curriculum and teaching techniques, classroom management, and other job-related topics.

The Human Resources Department has provided mentor training to over 1,050 teachers to ensure that all new teachers are provided quality mentors to support them in their first year teaching in the district. Approximately 46 First Year Success Seminars are offered throughout the year to support induction teachers. The district's induction program is designed to conform to all state induction and mentoring guidelines. Seven state-trained district staff members conduct on-site mentor training for teachers serving as mentors.

The Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE) was established to enable degreed individuals, who otherwise do not meet certification requirements, to gain employment in the public schools in a PACE-approved subject area teaching position. The district currently employs 122 teachers who are participating in the PACE Program. Critical need subject areas include science, mathematics, English language arts, Spanish, and emotionally disabled. Forty (40) PACE candidates teach mathematics and science in the district. Greenville County is often the venue for the regional classes and seminars held through the State Department. These teachers are also supported by mentors and help sessions as needed.

Extensive professional development opportunities are provided for administrators, teachers, and staff through the district's Professional Growth and Leadership programs and other initiatives:

- Monthly professional cluster meetings among district and school leaders facilitate capacity-building in a collaborative manner.
- The district initiated the Principal Internship Program in 2007-2008 to prepare effective assistant principals who desire to move to the principalship.
- Professional conversations and activities, such as book studies among district and school leaders, facilitate capacity-building in a collaborative manner.
- Regularly scheduled staff meetings for Central Office staff and monthly meetings for principals facilitate continued leadership development.
- Ongoing professional development/training supports the effective implementation of district instructional initiatives (e.g., MAP assessment, technology, content area support, National Board certification, Baldrige principles, ADEPT/PAS-T).
- Specific training sessions are provided for new principals in an effort to ensure smooth school openings and closings and to offer suggestions for preparing for testing and for dealing with varied personnel issues.
- Human Resources Department staff meet with new principals annually concerning hiring and termination procedures, certification issues, and position control.
- Assistant principals and administrative assistants meet as a group four or five times a year to address topics intended to enhance their professional skills.

The district promotes ongoing teacher growth and development through a variety of initiatives:

- Partial tuition reimbursement is offered to employees taking courses to obtain teacher certification and to teachers taking graduate level courses toward an advanced degree or an additional area of certification.
- Classes are available to support teachers preparing for core content subjects and for the Praxis exams.
- The district participates in Project CREATE, a program that supports teachers desiring to become certified in special education.
- The district participates in Middle Level Teach, a USC program that supports efforts of middle school teachers who are already high school- or elementary-certified to become middle level-certified.
- Administrators and teachers are required to develop yearly professional development plans.
- All teachers must participate in a minimum of 24 hours of professional development during each school year. Professional development may include workshops, conferences, in-services, and coursework. At least 12 of these 24 hours must be offered by the school/principal. This requirement is minimum and does not prevent the principal or teachers from participating in additional professional development.

- Employees provide input about professional development through evaluation forms that are completed at the close of training sessions. Responses are tallied and the data are used in planning future sessions. Topics for professional development can also be requested by employees or their supervisors.
- Teachers can earn up to two non-student days off for participating in professional development that is outside their working hours.

Teachers are given opportunities for leadership through a variety of forums:

- Teachers serve as grade level/subject area lead teachers and/or as members of their school's leadership team.
- Teachers serve as mentors for induction teachers and experienced teachers new to their schools.
- Teachers provide recommendations for instructional improvement through their involvement in district/school focus groups.
- Teachers participate in annual surveys designed to determine their most significant needs.
- The school portfolio process allows all teachers to be actively engaged in school improvement.
- An active Teacher Forum enables teacher leaders to provide input and feedback to the Superintendent on a regular basis.

District evaluation instruments for administrators and teachers are designed to support and facilitate professional growth and improvement:

- Performance assessment systems are utilized for the professional staff of all schools to ensure that quality personnel are in each position.
- One third of the administrators are evaluated every year, utilizing the Performance Assessment System for Administrators (PAS-A), based on seven performance dimensions, including student achievement, instructional leadership, school climate, human resource management, organizational management, communication and community relations, and professionalism.
- One third of the instructional coaches are evaluated each year using the Performance Assessment System for Instructional Coaches (PAS-IC), structured in a similar manner.
- The Human Resources Evaluation Office formally evaluates approximately 520 teachers each year using a three-person evaluation team and the Performance Assessment System for Teachers (PAS-T). The PAS-T is based on eight performance dimensions, including student achievement, professionalism, communication, learning environment, assessment, instructional delivery, instructional planning and knowledge of curriculum and content.
- The PAS-T instrument is also used to evaluate one-third of the continuing contract teachers in each school each year.
- At district direction, each school implements a system of documented classroom observations by the school staff that provide written feedback for teachers.
- There is a monitored expectation that school and district administrators will observe regularly in classes and provide frequent feedback to teachers.

The district supports the health and wellness of employees through several initiatives:

- The Human Resources Department is in the process of designing and implementing an Employee Assistance Program.
- The school district accepted a challenge from the Greenville Hospital System and joined Activate Greenville in an effort to improve the health of its 9,000 employees.
- As the result of a series of focus groups, the Bus Driver Safety Incentive and Summer Compensation Program was implemented. This program addresses the need to keep drivers focused on safety, and also rewards the best drivers with a bonus to help meet their financial needs during the summer months.

2. How does the leadership ensure that the allocation of financial resources is supportive of the school system's vision, programs, services, and its plans for continuous improvement?

Goal 4 of the District Strategic Plan focuses on the effective management and continued development of financial resources necessary to provide and support a quality educational program for students. The Strategic Plan guides the allocation of all financial resources and the direction and development of the district's long-term and short-range general fund budget plans. Initiatives funded from 2004-05 through 2008-09 have all been rooted in the Strategic Plan. Those initiatives also include the allocation of school nurses, instructional coaches, additional guidance personnel, and elementary science lab instructors. Revised allocation formulas reduce class size and provide additional school administrative support personnel, such as assistant principals, administrative assistants, and career development facilitators.

Eighty percent (80%) of the items included in the general fund budget have direct impact at the school level in the form of funding for salaries, utilities, supplies, and maintenance. All additions to the annual general fund budgets in the five year period from FY05 through FY09 have been for direct and indirect services provided to schools. No additional district staff have been included in the general fund budget during that time. The State Department of Education, through its In\$ite system, found that Greenville County Schools spends a significantly lower percentage of its budget on program management than do other districts across the state.

Respective aspects of the budget are built on appropriate research-based projection models. By considering both general fund and special revenue budgets as one system and assuring that all budgets are aligned with and reflect the Strategic Plan goals, the district promotes a systemic approach to the budgeting process. The budget documents are constructed so that the Strategic Plan goal(s) relevant to each proposed new initiative is specified. Similarly, if cuts are planned, the impacted Strategic Plan goal(s) is specified. The budget is presented to the district's Board of Trustees and to the general public in this form.

Principals and other location supervisors provide input during the budget process which is used to draft the preliminary budget. The preliminary budget is reviewed by groups of principals and district leaders before submission to the Superintendent for final review and presentation to the Board of Trustees. The Board hosts a public forum to receive input regarding the proposed General Fund Budget.

Comprehensive District Operating Instructions (DOIs) define processes for financial activities in the district. The Finance Department is currently taking steps to make DOIs available in electronic form on the website. The district's Procurement Code is, by law, substantially similar to the State Procurement Code and outlines requirements, depending on the dollar value of the intended purchase.

Salary schedules for all employee groups, a supplement schedule for athletic and extracurricular assignments, and procedures governing travel are all operational. To support the ability of principals to recruit and hire competitively, the timeline associated with the employee baseline process (release of staff allocations based on projected school enrollment) has been moved to early March of each year.

Multiple audits assure appropriate monitoring and control of financial functions. South Carolina law requires that the district's finances be audited annually by an external CPA firm. Additionally, multiple audits are conducted on an annual basis by the district's Internal Auditing Department, by the South Carolina Department of Education, and by the Federal Department of Education.

The district's Food Service Program, governed by USDA guidelines, is financially self-sufficient and requires no general fund allocation. High standards of quality and safety are in place and monitored. The program is audited regularly for compliance with health and safety guidelines by an independent, external auditing firm.

The transfer of budgeted funds among accounts is controlled by Board policy and district regulations. Board policy specifies approval requirements, depending on the amount of the transaction. Some budget transfers require Board approval; transfers not covered by Board policy or district procedures require the approval of the Executive Director of Finance.

In compliance with a specific Strategic Plan strategy, the district is implementing a new software program to support Human Resources, Finance, Food and Nutrition Services, and Student Activity Fund activities. The integrated data base will afford greater accessibility of financial information to principals, bookkeepers, and administrators, and will accommodate more timely research on past and current financial activities.

The district continues to explore ways of generating additional revenue to support the Strategic Plan goals. In 2007-08, the district issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for investment services. Utilizing the highest yielding investment opportunity, the district has realized returns above the market. District investments are protected by government-issued bonds, thereby, considerably reducing potential risks.

3. How does the school system ensure, support, and monitor the provision of resource and support services that meet the needs of all students?

Goal 3 of the District Strategic Plan focuses on the support necessary to ensure a quality school environment conducive to learning. Plan objectives focus on access to educational resources, the availability and effective use of technology to enhance teaching/learning and to support district and school operations, an effective system of student services, effective systems of planning for student projection and assignment, a safe and efficient student transportation system, and effective and efficient systems to support the district's operations.

To reflect the intent of the District Strategic Plan, district support systems are designed to relieve the school administrative staff of operational responsibilities to the greatest extent possible. Because school leaders' primary responsibility is instructional leadership, the district has made a concerted effort to structure district operational systems so that school leaders can function successfully in that role without the distractions of operational issues.

The BEST building program, now in its final completion stages, reflects the district's commitment to provide and support a quality educational program for its students. BEST represents the largest school facilities building program in the history of South Carolina. The program, begun in 2002, was made possible through a unique financing structure that allowed significant replacement of existing sub-par facilities and the construction of new and/or expanded facilities to accommodate growth needs through 2010 with no annual millage impact to taxpayers. The district's comprehensive Long Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program guides planning for future facility needs based on student growth projections and educational programming changes.

The district's Long-Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program provides a comprehensive process and set of priorities for the maintenance, improvement, and addition of facilities to meet student needs. District Facilities, Planning/Demographics, and Maintenance/Operations staff members work with schools and departments to annually review and revise the plan. The current plan extends to 2016.

Under the leadership of the Director of Attendance Services, Attendance Department staff work with students and their parents to increase awareness of the compulsory attendance law and the importance of regular school attendance. Services are focused on both intervention and prevention through phone calls, letters, and home visits. The Attendance Intervention Modules (AIM) program focuses on increased parental involvement and improved communication skills as means of helping students and their families avoid court intervention. An incentives-based competition among schools, known as the "Attendance Blitz," promotes regular school attendance.

School Social Workers serve as liaisons between home, school, and community. They assess student and family needs and assist in identifying barriers that interfere with students' ability to benefit most effectively from their educational experiences. Among many activities, School Social Workers consult with school personnel to facilitate understanding of home, school, and community factors that affect the student; facilitate communication and understanding between home and school; provide parents with transportation to school conferences and medical appointments when none is available; establish parent contact when teachers are unsuccessful in doing so; and help families gain access to needed community resources.

The district has in place a comprehensive long-range plan and associated procedures to be followed in the case of emergency. The plan was developed by district staff and community experts in the field of emergency preparedness in compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), as directed by Homeland Security. Each school and office in the district has developed a condensed, site-specific, user friendly emergency plan that is consistent with the overall district plan. These plans are managed and enhanced by means of web-based crisis management software. Training is provided at every site by both select district staff and outside subject matter experts in the areas of threat assessment and emergency preparedness planning, response, and recovery. In the event of a major crisis, communication interoperability with Greenville County emergency first responders is provided to each school and is monitored on a full time basis. The district has implemented separate communication systems, both internal and external, to provide information to parents and the community in a timely manner during a crisis.

Under the leadership of the Executive Director of Education Technology Services (ETS) and his staff, a technology addition and replacement plan, known as REFRESH, is designed to provide each school and location with up-to-date technology appropriate to its mission. The plan is designed to accommodate a five-year cycle and is annually reviewed and revised, if necessary. At the end of the current cycle, REFRESH II will be designed to cover the subsequent five-year time period.

A system of comprehensive student support services is provided through the combined efforts of several district departments and offices, led by the Director of Student Services, the Director of Transportation, the Director of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, the Director of Athletics, and the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education, as well as specialists in the areas of guidance, health, and nutrition. Each school is staffed by a full-time nurse, and the implementation of special education management services is organized by geographic area to promote efficiency of service.

The Federal Programs Director focuses Title I funds to supplement many of the previously cited initiatives. Title I funds additional staff and extensive instructional technology equipment to provide classrooms with state-of-the-art resources. Additionally, Title I funds supplemental nurses and social workers to address inequities of students living in poverty that affect academic achievement. Additionally, 4 district Social Workers serve students in all schools across the district. One of the 4, who is bilingual, serves non-English-speaking Hispanic families. One serves as the district's liaison for students who are homeless.

The district is one of only a few in the state that employs its own investigation/enforcement division to promote safety and security. Working in cooperation with the Greenville County Sheriff's Department, district investigators serve all schools. One investigator is designated solely to gang activity, as a preventive measure. The district operates the only UL-approved security monitoring center operated by a public entity in the state of South Carolina. District security officers, rather than school administrators, are the first-line responders to after-hours incidents that occur at schools. Trained first aid-certified responders are in place at every location, and AED devices are operational at every high school and middle school. The district plans a progressive implementation of AED devices at the elementary level, with completion scheduled for 2009-10. By the end of the current school year, every school's entrance will be designed to permit building access only through the main office, with security camera and security alarm systems installed and operational. Video monitoring systems are operational on all regular route buses and all buses are connected by Nextel or radio to the district's Transportation Office. GPS systems will be in place on all regular route buses by the end of the current school year.

Facility repair and maintenance are well planned, well communicated, and data-driven. An electronic work-order maintenance system allows for initial entry of a work order at the site. Technicians performing the requested work send electronic confirmation of its completion via Blackberry. The planned program of preventive maintenance is carried out by the plant engineer at each location, working with a district-designated maintenance crew. Maintenance staff respond to maintenance, repair, or operations emergencies on a 24-hour per day, seven day per week basis. Supervisors in the Maintenance Department conduct bi-weekly, electronic inspections of facilities, the results of which are shared with principals and department managers for appropriate follow-up. Additional financial resources have been provided to support the appropriate level of maintenance required by the additional square footage and complexity of the new building systems.

To promote continuous improvement and the adherence to high standards of quality, the district implements a planned replacement cycle for equipment and employs specialists in maintenance and operations who have demonstrated expertise in their areas of responsibility. Specialists include licensed plumbers and electricians, system-specific certified HVAC technicians, and individuals who hold general contractor licenses, as well as specialists in custodial services, athletic turf management, security system design and implementation, and other maintenance functions.

EVIDENCE

<p>5.1 Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • Board Policy • PAS-A • PAS-T • Salary Schedules • Professional Development Plans • Induction Program • Mentoring Program • Principal Intern Program • Recruitment Events • Human Resources Recruitment Materials • Assistant Principal and Administrative Assistant Applicant Pool • Instructional Coach and Curriculum Resource Teacher Applicant Pool
<p>5.2 Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparations, ability, knowledge, and experience)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Policy • Federal Program Guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCLB HQ - Title I - Title II - IDEIA • District Allocation Guidelines • Budget Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Fund - Special Revenue

EVIDENCE

<p>5.3 Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • School Portfolios • PAS-A • PAS-T • District/School Professional Development Plans/ Offerings
<p>5.4 Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Policy • District Strategic Plan • Federal Program Guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCLB HQ - Title I - Title II - IDEIA • District Allocation Guidelines • Budget Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Fund - Special Revenue
<p>5.5 Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Policy • District Strategic Plan • Budget Process • Budget Documents
<p>5.6 Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Audit Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial - Procurement - Federal - State • Internal Audit Documents
<p>5.7 Maintains sites, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • Long-Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program • Facilities Management • Preventive Maintenance Plan • Work-Order System

EVIDENCE

<p>5.8 Establishes and implements written security and crisis management plans with appropriate training for stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District/School Crisis/Emergency Plans • District Security Plan
<p>5.9 Implements processes and plans for maintaining and improving sites, facilities, and equipment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • Long-Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program • Staff Facilities Management Specialists • Preventive Maintenance Plan
<p>5.10 Provides technology infrastructure and equipment that is up-to-date and sufficient to accomplish the system’s goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • REFRESH • District Technology Plan
<p>5.11 Provides and coordinates support services that meet the health, counseling, nutrition, safety, co-curricular, transportation, and special learning needs of all students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • Crisis/Emergency Plans • Full-time Nurse in Each School • Guidance Services • Food Services Program • Student Transportation Plan • Athletic Program Support • Student Services Support
<p>5.12 Provides student support services coordinated with the school, home, and community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • Budget Process/Allocations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Fund - Special Revenue • IEP/504 Process • Title I Services • Academic After-School Programs • Business, Community, and Inter-agency Collaborations • Meeting Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Principals - PTA - SIC



Standard 6
***Stakeholder
Communication
and Relationships***

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report

Standard 6: Stakeholder Communication and Relationships



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

Impact Statement

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. School personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.



INDICATORS In fulfillment of this standard, the system:		NE	E	O	HF
6.1	Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning				X
6.2	Communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support			X	
6.3	Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system				X
6.4	Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders				X
6.5	Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders				X
Key - NE - Not Evident • E - Emerging • O - Operational • HF - Highly Functional					

Not Evident
Emerging

Little or no evidence exists
Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice

Operational
Highly Functional

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Focus Questions

1. How does the school system's leadership ensure that the system and its schools are responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction?

The agenda for each meeting of the Board of Trustees provides opportunity for public comment, during which members of the general public can voice opinions about district-related issues, school services, and instructional programs. Individuals are allowed three minutes to speak and, although the Board does not respond to the comments at that time, speakers subsequently meet with or receive a response from a district administrator addressing their concern, question, or suggestion.

The Superintendent meets regularly with Teacher Forum, with students through the Inter-High Council, and with business leaders and PTA leadership to discuss her vision and plans and to receive input. She hosts four community breakfast events yearly to discuss student achievement results and district challenges/priorities. As a result of the district's BEST building program, the district has held 69 school dedications in the past five years. Each of them has provided an opportunity for the Superintendent to share information about the district, its students, and its progress.

The district employs a full-time Parent Support Specialist to guide and coordinate PTA activities and a full-time Parent Resource Representative to investigate and respond to parent concerns.

The district has established a committee of citizens to assist with recommendations related to the assignment of students to schools. Each Board member appoints one citizen from his/her geographic area to serve on the Student Advisory Committee, which meets as needed. The committee holds public hearings at multiple locations across the district when re-assignment of neighborhoods is being considered.

Periodically throughout each school year, district teachers, parents, and students are surveyed on an array of topics. Staff in the district's Research, Evaluation, and Accountability Department conduct each of the surveys and analyze and summarize the results for review and consideration by district leaders.

Each fall, all full-time teachers, guidance counselors, media specialists, and assistant principals are asked to complete the Greenville County Schools' Teacher Survey focused on leadership; curriculum; instructional planning and delivery; assessment; learning environment; communication; and professionalism. In order to ensure comprehensive and valid results, each school must have an 80% completion rate. Results are used by school personnel to continuously improve the teaching/learning process.

Each spring, the State Department of Education distributes three surveys to schools to assess satisfaction levels among teachers, parents, and students. Teachers are able to take this survey online during February, while parent and student surveys are conducted in hard copy during the month of March.

The Research Department develops and implements other school- or project-specific surveys as requested. Surveys conducted during the 2007-08 school year included a Locus of Control Survey for Graduate Greenville; a Freshman Academy/Graduate Greenville Survey; and a Global Studies Survey for Greenville Middle School parents. Finally, staff also develop and distribute workshop and training evaluation surveys in order to assess the effectiveness of professional development/technical assistance opportunities.

Collaboration with businesses and community agencies to enhance and support student learning is evidenced by the strong partnerships in place across the district:

- The district is collaborating with the Greenville Salvation Army to create a community elementary school, A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School, to be built adjacent to the Kroc Center in downtown Greenville. This local effort, a keystone in providing services to children and families and development of downtown Greenville's Westside, mirrors a nationwide trend by public schools and community agencies to join as partners to meet the unique needs of a community. In making schools a hub of community activity and incorporating programs for the entire family, more parents have the opportunity to be involved in their children's education, and school facilities remain open throughout the year, thereby, maximizing taxpayers' investments.
- Through advocacy, planning, collaboration, and funding, United Way of Greenville County's Success by 6 School Readiness Community Impact Council assists public and private agencies in improving and enhancing services for young children. The School Readiness Council currently funds a Hispanic parent educator in Greer and child care for the Family Literacy/GED program located at the YWCA and Northwest Crescent Child Development Center.
- First Steps of Greenville County provides programming and financial support for low-income young children and their families. First Steps currently funds 11 parent educators, child care for the Family Literacy/GED programs located at Foothills Family Learning Center and Golden Strip Child Development Center, as well as the Riley Child Development Center director and clerk positions.
- The district is assisting The City of Greenville with the development of a Youth Civic Engagement Plan for the city and, ultimately, the county. The Youth Civic Engagement Plan will identify current services/gaps and develop a process for youth input and shared leadership so that needs can be more effectively addressed.
- Through the Baldrige Schools Program sponsored by the Carolina First Center for Excellence, school staff receive Baldrige/Continuous Quality Improvement training and coaching. The program promotes continuous improvement and performance excellence for students, teachers, administrators, and school district personnel. Begun in 2002 in three schools, the program is currently being utilized in 31 schools.
- A collaboration among Greenville County Schools, Clemson University, and the International Center for Automotive Research (ICAR) is a catalyst for research-based professional development in mathematics and science for high school teachers.
- More than 3,000 secondary students and 95 businesses participate in the district's on-site and virtual shadowing programs that provide students with "real world" experiences. Students have opportunities to observe various careers and are exposed to citizenship opportunities.
- Business leaders participate on the district's Teacher Recruitment Task Force and sponsor the district's annual Shining Stars Recruitment Event. Financial and in-kind contributions for this event total more than \$80,000.
- Local businesses and civic clubs support the district's Teacher of the Year Program, Employees of the Year Program, Shining Stars Recognition Events, and Salute to Education. Public events honoring employees and students are attended by more than 2,000 people each year.
- Local agencies such as the American Legion War Museum, the Greenville Cultural Exchange Center, and the Greenville County Library offer facilities, resources, and support to assist teachers and students in building real-world connections between the community's present and past.

- Middle and high schools benefit from annual collaboration with the YMCA through the Youth in Government and Model United Nations programs.
- Jim Anthony, president of the Cliffs Communities, funds the Zest Quest Program, a student health program, for many schools across the northern part of the district.
- Business and civic clubs support individual schools through tutoring, mentoring, and shadowing activities.
- The GE-Southside High million dollar partnership focuses on decreasing dropouts and increasing the number of Southside graduates going on to post-secondary education. The initiative began with the help of a \$100,000 grant from the GE Foundation and has now reached \$1 million in financial contributions plus countless hours of volunteer support. Program highlights include a three-week Freshman Transition class, a four-day Freshman Camp to introduce all incoming ninth graders to Southside, three seminars for upperclassmen including a College Fair, staff development for helping at-risk students and applying hands-on teaching methods, vertical teaming with feeder schools, and increased tutoring and mentoring from GE volunteers. Funds are also used to upgrade technology.
- The School District-Pepsi Scholarship Golf Tournament includes teams from businesses and schools across Greenville County. Each year the tournament raises more than \$22,000 to fund scholarships for deserving seniors.
- Character education programs across the district are sponsored by Chick-Fil-A and Kiwanis Clubs.
- Youth leadership programs sponsored by The Greater Greenville and Greer Chambers of Commerce challenge young people to become engaged citizens and prepare them to serve in community leadership positions as adults.
- The Alliance for Quality Education, a local non-profit education foundation, serves as a vocal advocate for public education and coordinates community resources in support of various programs through a school mentoring program and by providing mini-grants to schools and teachers.
- Graduate Greenville, a community-wide effort to increase the graduation rate, is a partnership of Greenville County Schools, the United Way, and the Alliance for Quality Education. Combined financial and human resources of these entities are focused on the needs of “at-risk” students at several pilot high schools. The program kicks off each year on the Saturday prior to the opening of school. Community volunteers visit homes of students who have dropped out to encourage them to come back to school. Students who do return are provided academic assistance and support throughout the school year.
- Community agencies such as Communities in Schools, YMCA, and the Salvation Army offer after-school, extended day, extended year, and summer academic assistance programs for students. More than 50 community-based programs serve more than 9,000 students across the district.
- The Greenville Hospital System provides one athletic trainer at each high school and a group of trainers who serve middle schools on a shared basis.

The Greenville community, known for its strong interest in and focus on the arts, demonstrates its strong collaboration with the district through its multi-faceted support of the arts in schools. Greenville County boasts many arts venues such as the Peace Center for Performing Arts, the state's first Fine Arts high school, the Governor's School for the Arts, and various arts festivals.

- The Peace Center for the Performing Arts brings in thousands of children to its POPS Outreach Concerts, a series of 30+ professional performances that local students attend. Summer institutes and workshops are offered for teacher professional development in arts integration and to enhance teaching skills. Five GCS schools are designated by the Peace Center/Kennedy Center as IDEA (Intensive Development in Education through the Arts) schools, providing intensive work in arts integration.
- The Annual Spring Sing, sponsored by the Pleasantburg Rotary Club for over 20 years, celebrates music education in our schools with over 600 elementary and middle school students on stage at the Peace Center.
- The International Artisphere Festival includes a Juried Art Show for young middle and high school artists.
- The Warehouse Theatre sponsors the National Shakespeare in the Schools Program called the "Wooden O"; young professional actors work week-long residencies in schools free of charge.
- The Greenville Symphony Orchestra presents two free multi-school concerts annually for 5th graders and also has a "Shoulder to Shoulder" concert with talented high school musicians.
- The Greenville Museum sponsors a weekly arts lecture/demonstration and sponsors a yearly exhibition and tour season featuring a renowned illustrator of children's literature.
- The South Carolina Children's Theatre sponsors 3rd grade theatre residencies for a number of schools and provides a free elementary/middle school outreach touring program to educate children about the dangers of substance abuse, bullying, and gang activities.
- The Metropolitan Arts Council (MAC) supports the SmartArts program in over 20 schools each year. This program matches classroom teachers with artists and provides training in arts integration. MAC supports high school art programs through its "Open Doors" initiative, whereby students and community members visit artist studios, and offers quarterly mini-grants for educators.
- The Carolina Ballet Theatre offers a free concert for 5th graders and reduced ticket prices for other performances for all students.
- Centre Stage offers reduced ticket prices and free dress rehearsal performances for middle and high school students.

Local community agencies, including Mental Health, Shelter Homes, Guardian ad Litem, Department of Juvenile Justice, Youth Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Head Start, Social Services, and Baby Net, provide services to students as requested. Various department personnel work with local, doctors, dentists and optometrists to provide screenings and needed preventive care to low-income students.

Special Education Services works with various service providers, including Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Social Services, Autism Society, Family Connections of South Carolina, and many others across the Upstate, to more effectively support students.

2. What avenues are used to communicate information to stakeholders about the effectiveness of the school system and its schools, including the sharing of student performance results?

Goal 5 of the District Strategic Plan establishes as a priority improved public understanding and support of public schools. The Strategic Plan outlines major communications goals; specific objectives are addressed in a detailed Communications/Marketing Plan, developed and implemented each year by the Communications Department. The plan outlines specific strategies through which the district communicates with and involves internal and external stakeholders.

- An electronic management memo, organized around the Strategic Plan goals, is distributed weekly to administrators throughout the school system.
- An electronic internal bulletin board for employees is distributed every two weeks to inform employees of important events, available resources, and workshops. All Users e-mail alerts are sent as needed.
- Headliners system solicits news from schools and other locations to share through the weekly Media Tip Sheet, sent to 24 media outlets, media releases, newsletters and publications.
- An electronic internal newsletter is distributed regularly to all employees to inform them about award-winning staff and schools, available resources, and other news.
- An electronic telephone distribution system, School Messenger, sends school news and emergency messages to parents.
- The district's Parent Portal, provides all parents with access to their children's academic records, attendance, school news, dates, and other information. The information is available via the Internet or telephone.
- The GCS website is updated regularly to keep parents, general community, and employees informed about the school system's accomplishments and needs.
- Teachers post course syllabi and expectations on their websites and communicate information to parents through individual teacher-parent conferences.
- The GCS 24-hour cable channel broadcasts programming that highlights the school system's accomplishments and needs.
- An electronic external newsletter is distributed monthly to 1,300 community leaders and other Very Informed Persons (VIPs) who subscribe to the publication.
- Various publications are printed and distributed to prospective employees, parents, newcomers, and business leaders through Chambers of Commerce and newcomer groups.
- Newspaper inserts are published each year, recognizing Teachers of the Year and the Graduating Class.
- An Annual Report is published each year in The Greenville News and The Greenville Journal. Posters highlighting the information are displayed in all schools and other locations and posted on the website.
- The Superintendent regularly publishes columns in The Greenville News to inform parents and taxpayers about learning expectations, student achievement, and district progress.
- The school district and schools participate in or host activities to connect the community to the school, such as parent orientations, scholarship fairs, academic competitions, and community festivals and expos.

All curriculum committees include representation of principals and teachers from appropriate school levels. Parents, teachers and other staff are represented on the school calendar committee.

Each school implements an annual professional development plan based on district priorities, student achievement goals, and staff needs at their school. Employees provide input about professional development through evaluation forms that are completed at the close of training sessions. Responses are tallied and the data are used in planning future sessions. Topics for professional development can also be requested by employees or their supervisors.

Schools provide information to parents to ensure that they are well informed about district and school expectations, their individual child's achievement, school progress, and important school news. For general news and reports on progress, schools use a variety of media, including newsletters, website postings, teacher updates, progress reports, quarterly report cards, school improvement plans, and meetings. School Report Cards are distributed each year to all parents and posted on the GCS website. School Profiles are updated each year and posted on the GCS website. The profiles provide information about student achievement, quality of instructional staff, student and school accomplishments, and the school facility.

Public meetings/presentations are held regularly to inform school faculty and staff, parents, students, legislators, and the community of district progress. The Schools Channel includes a recently introduced monthly television program, *Enlighten with Dr. Fisher*, to highlight achievements in the five strategic plan goal areas. Those achievements are reinforced and expanded on the GCS website.

The Golden Circle Club allows citizens 60 years of age or older, disabled persons, and district employees to attend school-sponsored events free of charge. The group continues to grow and is currently serving approximately 8,600 members. Benefits were expanded two years ago to include free admission to Furman University athletic events.

Internally, employees are provided information regarding the requirements of their respective job, need for any continuing education/training, professional development opportunities, benefits, and the school system's expectations regarding work, safety and ethics.

Employee-specific information is shared through several media, including on-line access to personal benefits, vacation and medical leave days. The district contracts annually with an external vendor to review insurance coverage and offerings with individual employees.

Schools use a variety of media to communicate expectations and progress to parents, including telephone calls from teachers and staff, individual meetings, e-mails, course catalogs and offerings, progress reports, and quarterly report cards. Communication with Hispanic students and their families is facilitated through the district's program of bilingual/bi-cultural services. Parent training, back-to-school orientations in Spanish, spots on the Hispanic radio station, and interpreters at parent conferences support the involvement of Hispanic families in their children's education.

Recent efforts to improve communications with parents include the implementation of an on-line parent portal and an electronic telephone calling system. The Parent Portal allows parents to access by Internet and telephone important information, such as their child's grades and attendance. School Messenger, an electronic telephone calling system, is used by all schools for a variety of purposes, including absence notification, school event announcements, PTA meeting notifications, and emergency messages. The program allows schools to target their messages to households of all students or any subgroup. This year, emergency communications have been enhanced to include School Messenger and a portable short distance AM transmitter to update parents in student dropoff/pickup lines.

For both internal and external publics, it is important that a system be in place to provide accurate and consistent information in response to concerns and questions. The Customer Service Center, established to provide one entry point for questions and inquiries and staffed by four customer service representatives, annually responds to thousands of calls and visitors to the Central Office. Using a database and GCS website, service representatives respond to inquiries or refer inquires/issues to appropriate staff.

A Transportation Call Center provides transportation-related information to parents and others through an automated calling system and the district's website. The Planning and Demographics Department maintains an inquiry-based "Find Your School" application for school assignment on the district website.

The district's Communications Department develops key messages, both general and special topic, to communicate to internal and external publics through various media. Each is accompanied by one or more message points. Examples of key messages for 2007-08 included:

- Student achievement continues to improve.
- Our school system and its people are essential to the community's success.
- Our school system offers many quality choices to meet students' needs.
- Our employees are "top quality" professionals.
- Our students care about their community.
- School is the safest place for children and young people.
- We make sound business decisions and are good financial stewards of tax dollars.

EVIDENCE

6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning

- District Strategic Plan
- Meeting Agendas
 - Board
 - Board ad hoc Committees
 - Executive Team
 - Principals
 - Teacher Forum
 - PTA/SIC
- State, District, School Surveys
- Community Collaborations
 - Alliance for Quality Education
 - Vision 2025
 - Success by 6
 - First Steps
 - Salvation Army
 - United Way
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Greenville Hospital System
 - Greenville Technical College
 - Education/Economic Development Act Regional Board
 - Riley Institute
- District/School Websites



EVIDENCE

<p>6.2 Uses system-wide strategies to listen to and communicate with stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • Meeting Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Board ad hoc Committees - Executive Team - Principals - Teacher Forum - PTA/SIC • State, District, School Surveys • Community Collaborations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alliance for Quality Education - Vision 2025 - Success by 6 - First Steps • District/School Websites • Customer Service Center • Transportation Call Center • Parent Resource Representative • Parent Support Specialist
<p>6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board ad hoc committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student Assignment - Discipline - Charter Schools • Community Collaborations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alliance for Quality Education - Vision 2025 - Success by 6 - First Steps - Graduate Greenville - Zest Quest

EVIDENCE

<p>6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Strategic Plan • Meeting Agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Board ad hoc Committees - Executive Team - Principals - Teacher Forum - PTA/SIC - School Faculty Meetings • District/School Websites • Parent Express • Report to the People • Newsletters • School Report Cards
<p>6.5 Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-Management Memo • e-Bulletin Board • Parent Express • Annual Report • Parent Portal • School Messenger • Customer Service Center • Transportation Call Center • District Website





Standard 7
***Commitment
to Continuous
Improvement***

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report



Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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



Impact Statement

A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the system with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the system and its schools demonstrate progress in improving student performance. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through analysis of student performance, system effectiveness, and assessment of the improvement process.

INDICATORS In fulfillment of this standard, the system:		NE	E	O	HF
7.1	Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results)				X
7.2	Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement				X
7.3	Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning				X
7.4	Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels				X
<i>Key - NE - Not Evident • E - Emerging • O - Operational • HF - Highly Functional</i>					

Not Evident
Emerging

Little or no evidence exists
Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice

Operational
Highly Functional

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

	INDICATORS In fulfillment of this standard, the system:	NE	E	O	HF
7.5	Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals				X
7.6	Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders				X
7.7	Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement				X
7.8	Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide			X	
7.9	Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts				X
	<i>Key - NE - Not Evident • E - Emerging • O - Operational • HF - Highly Functional</i>				

Not Evident

Little or no evidence exists

Operational

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented

Emerging

Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice

Highly Functional

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Focus Questions

1. Describe the process for continuous improvement used by the school system and its schools and the impact of this process on student learning and system effectiveness?

The strategic planning process at both the district and school levels serves as the foundation of the district's continuous improvement efforts. While district and school plans share a common framework and are based on the same vision, mission, shared beliefs, and goal areas, school plans include research-based objectives and strategies designed to address the unique needs of the school, as evidenced by available student performance data. District and school plans are updated annually, and new plans are developed every five years.

At both the district and school levels, internal and external stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, students, parents, community members, and business leaders, are invited to participate in the strategic planning process. Planning team members review the plan framework, analyze student achievement and school climate data from multiple sources, study relevant research pertaining to the objectives and strategies, and draw conclusions and make recommendations for plan revisions.

School plans are designed as portfolios. The school portfolio consists of a demographic profile of the school, a data-based academic needs assessment, identification of desired academic outcomes, an action plan and professional development plan for achieving outcomes, and a plan for measuring results. The updated district plan and school portfolios are reviewed and approved by the district's Board of Trustees annually.

The district maintains a comprehensive profile of the system, the students, and the community through the combined efforts of the departments of Education Technology Services; Research, Evaluation and Accountability; Planning/Demographics; and Communications. Data are maintained electronically and are available at both the district and school levels. Student data are maintained through the state-required SASI system and include individual and group demographics; a summary of achievement outcomes of the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT), High School Assessment Program (HSAP), End-of-Course (EOC) assessments; and non-achievement data related to attendance, discipline, and drop-outs. A comprehensive student locator system enables effective management of students' school assignments, the district's school-choice program, and the bus transportation system.

The Superintendent's Leadership Retreat each summer, attended by principals and district staff, sets the tone for the upcoming school year. The theme for the 2008 retreat was Strengthening Our Roots: Leadership for Continuous Improvement, and was grounded in the precept that *there are two lasting bequests that we can give our children: One is roots; the other is wings*. The district's focus for 2008-09 is strengthening and continuously improving programs currently in place before considering new initiatives.

Members of the Superintendent's Executive Team establish yearly priorities, based on the District Strategic Plan and the theme designated by the Superintendent, to guide the work of their staffs. Department priority initiatives are shared with the Executive Team. Individual school goals, also aligned to the District Strategic Plan, are established in conjunction with the school portfolio process. Principals and teachers annually develop specific, measurable student achievement goals based on demonstrated growth needs; goals are considered as a part of each individual's evaluation.

2. What process is used to ensure that the improvement goals reflect student learning needs and are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school system and its schools?

The Assistant Superintendents for Principal Supervision and School Accountability meet regularly with each principal to review and discuss student achievement data and the goals and action plans for the year. School goals are reviewed for alignment with the goals and strategies outlined in the District Strategic Plan and for effectiveness in addressing identified school needs.

A data-driven approach to instructional planning is a priority at both the district and school levels. School administrative and instructional teams, working with individual teachers, examine state and local assessment outcomes. Resulting information drives decisions about strategies that best meet individual and group instructional needs.

Many schools emphasize data-driven processes through creation of data walls or other structures that provide a vehicle for professional, data-based conversations about student learning among school faculty. Data resulting from MAP assessments are particularly significant and helpful in this context. MAP is a formative assessment system administered to students in grades two through nine each fall and spring, with an optional winter administration window. Because the system is aligned to the South Carolina academic standards,

district and school personnel are able to identify each student's individual strengths and areas in need of improvement and to differentiate instruction accordingly.

The district uses the academic audit process to provide comprehensive evaluations of academic programs in Title I schools identified as being in levels of "School Improvement." Audits are conducted by outside experts, usually retired educators with demonstrated instructional expertise. A major component of the audit process is the collection and study of student achievement data, as well as data related to non-achievement variables such as attendance, discipline, and school climate. The district has formed a District Oversight Committee, comprised of district instructional leaders, which provides alternative governance and intense instructional and operational oversight of schools in the "Restructuring" level of school improvement. The district has deliberately designed the proactive audit process to help schools avoid a designation of "Restructuring."

Response to Intervention (RTI), a comprehensive student-centered assessment and intervention model implemented in the regular classroom, is used to identify and address individual student difficulties before referral to special education.

3. What process is used to ensure that system and school personnel are provided professional development and technical assistance to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals?

Extensive professional development opportunities are provided for district and school leaders through the district's Professional Growth and Leadership programs and other initiatives.

- Ongoing professional development/training supports the effective implementation of district instructional initiatives (e.g., MAP assessment, technology, content area support, National Board certification, Baldrige principles, ADEPT/PAS-T).
- The district initiated the Principal Internship Program in 2007-2008 to prepare effective assistant principals who desire to move to the principalship.
- Professional conversations and activities, such as book studies among district and school leaders, facilitate capacity-building in a collaborative manner.
- Regularly scheduled staff meetings for Central Office staff and monthly meetings for principals facilitate continued leadership development.
- Specific training sessions are provided for new principals in an effort to ensure smooth school openings and closings and to offer suggestions for preparing for testing and for dealing with varied personnel issues.
- Assistant principals and administrative assistants meet as a group four or five times a year to address topics intended to enhance their professional skills.

Administrators and teachers are required to develop yearly professional development plans, aligned with the District Strategic Plan goal areas, school portfolio objectives, and individual growth needs determined through the performance evaluation process. All teachers must participate in a minimum of 24 hours of professional development during each school year. Professional development may include workshops, conferences, in-services, and coursework.

Employees provide input about professional development through evaluation forms that are completed at the close of training sessions. Responses are tallied and the data are used in planning future sessions. Topics for professional development can also be requested by employees or their supervisors.

The district promotes ongoing teacher growth and development through a variety of initiatives:

- Partial tuition reimbursement is offered to employees taking courses to obtain teacher certification and to teachers taking graduate level courses toward an advanced degree or an additional area of certification.
- Classes are available to support teachers preparing for core content subjects and for the Praxis exams.
- The district participates in Project CREATE, a program that supports teachers desiring to become certified in special education.
- The district participates in Middle Level Teach, a USC program that supports efforts of middle school teachers who are already high school- or elementary-certified to become middle level-certified.
- The district provides professional development for teachers, instructional coaches and other staff to support the teaching/learning process. Recent areas of focus include single gender education, instructional differentiation, teaching children in poverty, reading interventions, strategies for promoting diversity within the classroom, effective instructional strategies for at-risk students, formative assessment, and the selection of commercial instructional programs. Professional development on the Learning Focused Model is ongoing.
- Professional development opportunities are available throughout the year to help school personnel interpret and effectively use data to drive instruction and to make programmatic changes. District-level curriculum consultants provide support to this process for all core subject areas. Using an approach grounded in the effective analysis of assessment data, district leaders identify appropriate alternative teaching strategies, provide instructional materials, ideas, and techniques, and assist in determining adjustments that are needed in order to redirect instructional focus.
- Staff of the Title I Office provide strong support to Title I schools in the analysis and effective use of student achievement data from a variety of sources. Their work is focused primarily on interpreting and effectively using outcomes of the MAP administrations and the rich data that result.
- The Teaching and Learning Department holds regular meetings for all instructional coaches, curriculum resource teachers and department heads to discuss student performance data. The curriculum consultants in the Teaching and Learning Department train school-based leaders in the effective analysis and use of data and suggest strategies and tools to address the needs demonstrated through the analysis. The school leaders are responsible for training the teachers in their building how to use and interpret the data gleaned from student performance reports.

- Every school in the district has been allocated either an instructional coach or a curriculum resource teacher. These curriculum leaders are in place to assist classroom teachers with the disaggregation and use of school-level data. They provide guidance and support in the form of professional development, demonstration lessons, materials, book discussions and school portfolio development. Instructional coaches and curriculum resource teachers are the conduits through which training received from district personnel is transmitted to classroom teachers.

4. How does the leadership ensure that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders?

The district promotes focus on and accountability for results through a variety of structures and strategies:

- The Board of Trustees focuses on student performance and district progress at each monthly Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting. Meeting agendas, developed collaboratively by the Board officers and the Superintendent with input from district staff, are aligned to the five strategic plan goal areas. The initial section of each COW meeting is focused on student achievement and allows district leaders and school representatives to share student performance outcomes and to discuss instructional programs and issues. As a result of this process, Board members are better able to gauge the impact of their decisions on the classroom.
- The Superintendent's annual evaluation includes a comprehensive, data-based report to the Board of the district's progress on each of the strategic plan goals. An annual Strategic Plan Progress Report, highlighting the five goal areas of the Strategic Plan, is published and posted on the district's website. The update describes student achievement outcomes based on multiple performance measures, as outlined in goal 1, and summarizes progress on the other four goals that support student achievement.
- The Superintendent's Executive Team, comprised of district administrative leaders, meets weekly to discuss issues related to the strategic plan; to establish and monitor district priorities, processes, policies, and procedures; and to address concerns as they arise. The focus is on continuous improvement. Executive Team members are responsible to share outcomes of the discussion with their staffs.
- The Superintendent and district administrators meet monthly with principals, both as a total group and in small groups organized by geographic cluster, to discuss relevant issues and to hear concerns and suggestions for moving the district forward. Principals are responsible to share outcomes with their staffs.
- Five Assistant Superintendents for Principal Supervision and School Accountability are assigned the primary responsibility of providing leadership to the improvement of teaching, learning, and student achievement in the schools for which they are responsible. Assistant Superintendents monitor the implementation of student achievement goal strategies through school and classroom visits and consultation with principals.
- Regular meetings with principals, instructional coaches, assistant principals, lead teachers, and other staff groups promote a focus on results.
- Improvement models (e.g., High Schools That Work, Quality Tools initiative) are in place to monitor instructional program effectiveness.
- Collaboration and professional dialogues related to improved student achievement are promoted at the district and school levels through vertical and horizontal articulation.

- The school portfolio process is designed to promote and support continuous improvement; portfolios are reviewed and updated annually.
- District and school goals and expectations are communicated and reviewed with School Improvement Councils at their monthly meetings, with PTA members at regularly scheduled meetings, through frequently published district and school newsletters, through student-led parent conferences at International Baccalaureate, Baldrige, and some Title I schools, and through parent/teacher conferences at other schools.

District evaluation instruments for administrators and teachers are designed to support and facilitate professional growth and improvement

- Performance assessment systems are utilized for the professional staff of all schools to ensure that quality personnel are in each position.
- One third of the administrators are evaluated every year, utilizing the Performance Assessment System for Administrators (PAS-A), based on seven performance dimensions, including student achievement, instructional leadership, school climate, human resource management, organizational management, communication and community relations, and professionalism.
- One third of the instructional coaches are evaluated each year using the Performance Assessment System for Instructional Coaches, structured in a similar manner.
- The Human Resources Evaluation Office formally evaluates approximately 520 teachers each year using a three-person evaluation team and the Performance Assessment System for Teachers (PAS-T). The PAS-T is based on eight performance dimensions, including student achievement, professionalism, communication, learning environment, assessment, instructional delivery, instructional planning and knowledge of curriculum and content.
- The PAS-T instrument is also used to evaluate one third of the continuing contract teachers in each school each year.
- At district direction, each school implements a system of documented classroom observations by the school staff that provide written feedback for teachers.
- There is a monitored expectation that school and district administrators will observe regularly in classes and provide frequent feedback to teachers.
- Academic audits, directed by district staff and conducted in selected schools, provide data-based recommendations for strengthening teaching and learning in the school.
- The district Office of Closing the Gap provides intensive support to the improvement of teaching, learning, and student achievement in elementary schools in which the gap in achievement levels between students receiving subsidized and non-subsidized meals exceeds a data-based, district-established benchmark.
- District staff directly guide and support the development and implementation of school Title I and Technical Assistance plans.

- District staff direct and support the effective use of assessment data at the school level through a variety of initiatives and activities, including:
 - Implementation of Pas-A (Performance Assessment System for Administrators)
 - Implementation of Pas-T (Performance Assessment System for Teachers)
 - The development of common assessments for use at the school level to promote rigor and ensure standards alignment.
 - The annual updates of district and school portfolios

The district conducts program evaluations to insure effective program implementation. New programs or initiatives are approved for implementation only after careful consideration of the research base in which the program is grounded, the development and approval of an implementation plan, and a defined process for evaluating program effectiveness. Initiatives or programs are formatively evaluated on an ongoing basis, with a formal evaluation conducted after three years of implementation. Formal evaluations include both process measures and attention to impact on student achievement.

The district communicates the system's vision, purpose, expectations, and results-related information, both internally and externally, in a variety of formats:

- School Report Cards, published by the state of South Carolina, are sent to parents and other stakeholders annually.
- Summaries of Board meeting minutes are posted on the district's website and distributed to 1300 Very Informed Persons (VIPs) across the district.
- Schools develop and publish community reports and newsletters; many teachers prepare and disseminate weekly/monthly newsletters to parents; many teachers have classroom websites that focus on teaching, learning, and student achievement.
- The district's internal e-management memo, organized around the Strategic Plan goals, is delivered weekly to administrators throughout the district.
- An annual Progress Update, highlighting the five goals of the Strategic Plan, is published and posted on the district's website.
- The district website is updated regularly to keep parents, the general community, and employees informed about the district's vision, goals, progress and needs. School websites convey school-specific information
- The district's 24-hour cable channel broadcasts programs that highlight the district's vision, goals, progress and needs.
- Public meetings/presentations are held regularly to inform school faculty and staff, parents, students, legislators, and community members of district progress.
- The Superintendent hosts four community breakfast events yearly to discuss student achievement results and district challenges/priorities.
- The Superintendent meets regularly with Teacher Forum, students (through the Inter-High Council), business leaders, and PTA representatives to discuss the district's vision and goals and to receive input/feedback from those in attendance.
- The Superintendent regularly publishes columns in The Greenville News, highlighting recent accomplishments and topics of interest, all related to the district's vision for student performance.

EVIDENCE

<p>7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning process • Annual strategic plan update • On-going data analysis • School leadership teams • Long Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program
<p>7.2 Engages stakeholders in the process of continuous improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletters • PTA • SIC • Strategic planning meetings/teams • Long Range Facility Plan and Capital Improvement Program • School leadership teams • School/district websites • District-wide professional development opportunities
<p>7.3 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual strategic plan review and update • Superintendent's yearly evaluation report • Data analysis processes
<p>7.4 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing the Gap initiative • Data analysis (HSAP, PACT, EOC, SAT, ACT, AP) • District-wide professional development opportunities • Curriculum Connection • Lesson plans

EVIDENCE

<p>7.5 Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Academy • Administrator and teacher professional development plans • District-sponsored professional development • School Professional Development initiatives • Summer Instructional Technology Conference
<p>7.6 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Express • School and district websites • Parent portal • Media releases • Schools channel • Newsletters • Board meetings • School and district report cards • SIC/PTA Agendas
<p>7.7 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent's Evaluation Report • Meeting agendas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board - Executive Team - Principals - School Faculty - SIC/PTA • Survey data • Principal portfolio presentations • School and district report cards
<p>7.8 Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common planning periods • Summer Academy • Professional development days in calendar • Grade level meetings • Stipends

EVIDENCE

7.9 Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts

- School Portfolio Presentations
- Central Office Support
- Teaching and Learning Staff
- Professional development opportunities
- Curriculum Connection
- InfoWeb
- School and district websites





Section 3 *Quality Assurance*

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report

Quality Assurance

The district provides quality assurance through data-driven systems and review processes and a continued focus on student achievement.

The District Strategic Plan serves as the foundation of the district's continuous improvement efforts, defines overall district direction, guides district and school priorities, and serves as the basis of human, financial, and operational decisions. Of the five goals outlined in the strategic plan, goal 1 is the primary goal; goals 2 through 5 support goal 1.

1. Raise the academic challenge and performance of each student.
2. Ensure quality personnel in all positions.
3. Provide a school environment supportive of learning.
4. Effectively manage and further develop necessary financial resources.
5. Improve public understanding and support of public schools.

The goals-based, data-driven school portfolio process is aligned to district processes. The budget process reflects and supports the District Strategic Plan. Personnel evaluation systems are designed to reflect strategic plan goals.

The district maintains a comprehensive profile of the school system, its schools, and its students to support analysis of student performance and instructional planning. In addition to student demographics, the profile includes outcomes resulting from a variety of national, state, and local assessments. Data are disaggregated by gender, race, economic status, program participation, and other data categories of interest and made available to district and school staffs in easily-accessible electronic form.

A data-driven approach to instructional planning is a priority at both the district and school levels. The Board of Trustees devotes a major portion of each monthly Committee of the Whole meeting to a review of data and a study of programs and processes related to student achievement. District and school administrative and instructional teams, working with principals, school leadership teams, and individual teachers, examine state and local assessment outcomes. Resulting information drives decisions about strategies that best meet individual and group instructional needs. Many schools emphasize data-driven processes through creation of data walls or other structures that provide a vehicle for professional, data-based conversations among school faculty about student learning.

The Assistant Superintendents for Principal Supervision and School Accountability meet regularly with each principal to review and discuss student achievement data and the goals and action plans for the year. School

Improvement Councils at all schools, comprised of parents, teachers, and community members review achievement data regularly.

Twenty-six of the district's schools have been designated as Baldrige model schools. Students are responsible for leading goal-setting conferences with their teachers and parents and for tracking their own progress on assessments by keeping personal data notebooks and through discussions with their teachers and their peers. In addition to the Baldrige schools, other schools across the district, including Title I schools, have also implemented student-led conferences.

Through the administration of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), a formative assessment system administered in grades 2 through 9 each fall and spring, district and school staff are able to identify each student's individual strengths and areas in need of improvement and to differentiate instruction accordingly.

The district supports students in all schools through academic assistance programs before and after the school day and during the summer; through extensive Title I support services; by conducting academic audits in selected Title I schools that provide data-based analyses of school instructional programs and recommendations for improvement; and by a variety of services provided by the Office of Closing the Gap. Response to Intervention (RTI), a comprehensive student-centered assessment and intervention model implemented in the regular classroom, is used to identify and address individual student difficulties before referral to special education. When warranted, personnel are assigned to schools above baseline allocations to promote intense instructional support.

Multiple audits assure appropriate monitoring and control of financial functions. South Carolina law requires that the district's finances be audited annually by an external CPA firm. Additionally, audits are conducted on an annual basis by the district's Internal Auditing Department, by the South Carolina Department of Education, and by the Federal Department of Education. The district's Food Service Program is audited regularly for compliance with health and safety guidelines by an independent, external auditing firm. The instructional program is validated through the accreditation process conducted by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and by High Schools That Work, Making Middle Grades Work, and International Baccalaureate external review teams.

Program evaluation has a role in the district's quality assurance processes. New programs or initiatives are approved for implementation only after careful consideration of the research base in which the program is grounded, the development and approval of an implementation plan, and a defined process for evaluating program effectiveness. Programs are formatively evaluated on an ongoing basis; a process has recently been implemented whereby formal program evaluations are conducted after three years of implementation.

A process for communicating results of respective assessments is included in the district's overall communications plan. As outcomes of various assessments become available, the Communications Department, working with staff in Research, Evaluation, and Accountability, disseminate information in a timely manner, taking care not to breach any embargoes that may be in effect. News releases highlighting the results are generated for the district's website and for local media. Comprehensive reports are provided to the Board of Trustees at their monthly meeting following release of results. To facilitate effective communication, the district publishes an annual testing calendar that is distributed to school staff, parents, and members of the community across the district.



Section 4

Conclusion

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report

Conclusion

1. As you review your responses to the standards, what major trends, themes, or areas of focus emerge that cut across the seven standards?

- Clear focus on student achievement
- A Board of Trustees unified in its focus on student performance and unanimous in its support of visionary programs to support and enhance quality teaching and learning
- A District Strategic Plan that guides the school portfolio, budget, and personnel evaluation processes
- A quality program for recruiting, inducting, developing, evaluating, and retaining staff
- Analysis and use of data for instructional and operational planning
- State-of-the-art facilities that support a quality educational program
- Comprehensive technology systems that support teaching, learning, and school operations

2. Based on your review of these cross-cutting themes/trends and each of the seven standards, what would you consider to be your school system's greatest strengths?

- Clear focus on student achievement
 - The strategic planning process is systemic across the district
 - Goal 1 of the District Strategic Plan (student performance) is the primary goal and is supported by all other strategic plan goals and by district systems and processes.
 - The school portfolio process mirrors the district process; school and teacher goals are aligned to district goals.
 - Personnel evaluation systems are aligned with strategic plan goals.
 - The budget planning process is aligned with and reflects the strategic plan goals
- The district's 12-member Board of Trustees is unified in its focus on student performance and unanimous in its support of visionary programs to support and enhance quality teaching and learning.
- Human Resource systems effectively promote recruitment, induction, development, retention, and evaluation of personnel. 97.6% of the district's core subject area teachers are Highly Qualified under the guidelines of No Child Left Behind
- Advocacy and support for GCS from business leaders and community citizens promote and strengthen the district's continuous improvement efforts.
- State-of-the-art facilities support quality teaching and learning.
- Technology systems support and enhance teaching, learning, and school operations.
- The analysis and effective use of data guide instructional planning and school/district operations.

3. What would you consider to be your school system's greatest challenges?

- Increase the graduation rate as defined by South Carolina guidelines.
- Support and expand multiple pathways to high school completion.
- Close the achievement gap between students receiving subsidized and non-subsidized meals.
- Expand early intervention strategies to promote increased student achievement.
- Advocate for increased funding for 4K programs.
- Advocate for a change in the structure and formula under which K-12 education is funded in South Carolina.

4. How will you use the insights gained from this self-assessment to inform and enhance your quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts?

- As a result of the standards review process, as well as feedback from principals and teachers, the superintendent determined that the district theme for 2008-09 is Strengthening Our Roots: Leadership for Continuous Improvement. After five years of program expansion and enhancement, the district's focus for 2008-09 is strengthening and continuously improving programs currently in place before considering major new initiatives.
- There is greater understanding of the need for integrated planning and sharing of information across Central Office departments to facilitate the flow of accurate and timely information within the district and to external constituents.
- The district will expand its system for seeking feedback from the wider community about its perceptions of the district.
- As a result of expanded feedback, the district will be better able to target its messages to non-parents and other members of the community who do not have direct and regular contact with the district and schools.



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Appendix

District Accreditation - Standards Assessment Report

ACT	American College Test
ADEPT	Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teachers
AP	Advanced Placement
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
BEST	Building Equity Sooner for Tomorrow
COW	Committee of the Whole
CPA	Certified Public Accountant
CTE	Career and Technology Education
DOI	District Operating Instructions
EAA	Education Accountability Act
EEDA	Education and Economic Development Act
ELA	English Language Arts
ELDA	English Language Development Assessment
EOC	End of Course
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETS	Education Technology Services
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
FY	Fiscal Year
GCS	Greenville County Schools
GED	General Education Development
GTA	Gifted/Talented, Academic
HQ	Highly Qualified
HSAP	High School Assessment Program
HSTW	High Schools That Work
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICAR	International Center for Automotive Research
IDEA	Intensive Development in Education through the Arts
IDEIA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
ITBS	Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
LEP	Limited English Proficient
MAC	Metropolitan Arts Council
MAP	Measures of Academic Progress
MMGW	Making Middle Grades Work
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NIMS	National Incident Management System
PACE	Program of Alternative Certification for Educators
PACT	Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests
PAS-A	Performance Assessment System for Administrators
PAS-IC	Performance Assessment System for Instructional Coaches
PAS-T	Performance Assessment System for Teachers
PASS	Palmetto Assessment of State Standards
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RFP	Request for Proposal
RTI	Response to Intervention
SASI	School Administration Student Information
SAT	Scholastic Assessment Test
SCSBA	South Carolina School Boards Association
SCVS	South Carolina Virtual School
SDE	State Department of Education
SES	Supplemental Education Services
SIC	School Improvement Council
SRS	Student Registration System
STARS	Student Teachers Achievement Results Now Seminars
USC	University of South Carolina
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VIP	Very Informed Person
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

