



Rome City School System

Rome, Georgia

February 7-11, 2021

System Accreditation Engagement Review

215092

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Cognia Continuous Improvement System

Cognia defines continuous improvement as "an embedded behavior rooted in an institution's culture that constantly focuses on conditions, processes, and practices to improve teaching and learning." The Cognia Continuous Improvement System (CIS) provides a systemic, fully integrated solution to help institutions map out and navigate a successful improvement journey. In the same manner that educators are expected to understand the unique needs of every learner and tailor the education experience to drive student success, every institution must be empowered to map out and embrace their unique improvement journey. Cognia expects institutions to use the results and the analysis of data from various interwoven components for the implementation of improvement actions to drive education quality and improved student outcomes. While each improvement journey is unique, the journey is driven by key actions.

The findings of the Engagement Review Team are organized by the ratings from the Cognia Performance Standards Diagnostic and the Levels of Impact within the i3 Rubric: Initiate, Improve, and Impact.

Initiate

The first phase of the improvement journey is to **Initiate** actions to cause and achieve better results. The elements of the Initiate phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Engagement and Implementation. Engagement is the level of involvement and frequency of stakeholders in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. Implementation is the process of monitoring and adjusting the administration of the desired practices, processes, or programs for quality and fidelity. Standards identified within Initiate should become the focus of the institution's continuous improvement journey toward the collection, analysis, and use of data to measure the results of engagement and implementation. Enhancing the capacity of the institution in meeting these Standards has the greatest potential impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Improve

The second phase of the improvement journey is to gather and evaluate the results of actions to **Improve**. The elements of the **Improve** phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Results and Sustainability. Results come from the collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired result(s). Sustainability is results achieved consistently to demonstrate growth and improvement over time (a minimum of three years). Standards identified within Improve are those in which the institution is using results to inform their continuous improvement processes and to demonstrate over time the achievement of goals. The institution should continue to analyze and use results to guide improvements in student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Impact

The third phase of achieving improvement is **Impact**, where desired practices are deeply entrenched. The elements of the **Impact** phase are defined within the Level of Impact of Embeddedness. Embeddedness is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are deeply ingrained in the culture and operation of the institution. Standards identified within Impact are those in which the institution has demonstrated ongoing growth and improvement over time and has embedded the practices within its culture. Institutions should continue to support and sustain these practices that yield results in improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Cognia Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

Accreditation is pivotal in leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research-based standards, the Cognia Accreditation Process examines the whole institution—the program, the cultural context, and the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of learners. Through the accreditation process, highly skilled and trained Engagement Review Teams gather first-hand evidence and information pertinent to evaluating an institution’s performance against the research-based Cognia Performance Standards. Review teams use these Standards to assess the quality of learning environments to gain valuable insights and target improvements in teaching and learning. Cognia provides Standards that are tailored for all education providers so that the benefits of accreditation are universal across the education community.

Through a comprehensive review of evidence and information, our experts gain a broad understanding of institution quality. Using the Standards, the review team provides valuable feedback to institutions, which helps to focus and guide each institution’s improvement journey. Valuable evidence and information from other stakeholders, including students, also are obtained through interviews, surveys, and additional activities.

Cognia Standards Diagnostic Results

The Cognia Performance Standards Diagnostic is used by the Engagement Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on the Cognia Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity**, and **Resource Capacity**. Results are reported within four ranges identified by color. The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

Color	Rating	Description
Red	Insufficient	Identifies areas with insufficient evidence or evidence that indicated little or no activity leading toward improvement
Yellow	Initiating	Represents areas to enhance and extend current improvement efforts
Green	Improving	Pinpoints quality practices that are improving and meet the Standards
Blue	Impacting	Demonstrates noteworthy practices producing clear results that positively impact the institution

Under each Standard statement is a row indicating the scores related to the elements of Cognia’s i3 Rubric. The rubric is scored from one (1) to four (4). A score of four on any element indicates high performance, while a score of one or two indicates an element in need of improvement. The following table provides the key to the abbreviations of the elements of the i3 Rubric.

Element	Abbreviation
Engagement	EN
Implementation	IM
Results	RE
Sustainability	SU
Embeddedness	EM

Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress toward its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to implement strategies that improve learner and educator performance.

Leadership Capacity Standards										Rating
1.1	The system commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.2	Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the system's purpose and desired outcomes for learning.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.3	The system engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.4	The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support system effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.5	The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	3	EM:	
1.7	Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the system's purpose and direction.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.9	The system provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	
1.10	Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	3	EM:	

Leadership Capacity Standards										Rating
1.11	Leaders implement a quality assurance process for their institutions to ensure system effectiveness and consistency.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	

Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement and success is the primary expectation of every institution. An effective learning culture is characterized by positive and productive teacher/learner relationships, high expectations and standards, a challenging and engaging curriculum, quality instruction and comprehensive support that enable all learners to be successful, and assessment practices (formative and summative) that monitor and measure learner progress and achievement. Moreover, a quality institution evaluates the impact of its learning culture, including all programs and support services, and adjusts accordingly.

Learning Capacity Standards										Rating
2.1	Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the system.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	
2.3	The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs, and skills needed for success.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
2.4	The system has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers that support their educational experiences.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	
2.5	Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.6	The system implements a process to ensure the curriculum is clearly aligned to standards and best practices.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the system's learning expectations.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	3	EM:	
2.8	The system provides programs and services for learners' educational futures and career planning.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	

Learning Capacity Standards										Rating
2.9	The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to the demonstrable improvement of student learning.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.12	The system implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.									Rating
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	

Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably, so the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The institution examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, organizational effectiveness, and increased student learning.

Resource Capacity Standards										Rating
3.1	The system plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the system's effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
3.2	The system's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
3.3	The system provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
3.4	The system attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the system's purpose and direction.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
3.5	The system integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	

Resource Capacity Standards											Rating
3.6	The system provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the system.										Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4	
3.7	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the system's purpose and direction.										Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	4	
3.8	The system allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the system's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.										Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4	

Assurances

Assurances are statements that accredited institutions must confirm they are meeting. The Assurance statements are based on the type of institution, and the responses are confirmed by the Accreditation Engagement Review Team. Institutions are expected to meet all Assurances and are expected to correct any deficiencies in unmet Assurances.

Assurances Met		
YES	NO	If No, List Unmet Assurances by Number Below
X		

Accreditation Status and Index of Education Quality®

Cognia will review the results of the Accreditation Engagement Review to make a final determination concerning accreditation status, including the appropriate next steps for your institution in response to these findings. Cognia provides the Index of Education Quality (IEQ) as a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. This formative tool for improvement identifies areas of success and areas in need of focus. The IEQ comprises the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: Leadership Capacity, Learning Capacity, and Resource Capacity. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provide information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria. Institutions should review the IEQ in relation to the findings from the review in the areas of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. An IEQ score below 250 indicates that the institution has several areas within the Initiate level and should focus their improvement efforts on those Standards within that level. An IEQ in the range of 225–300 indicates that the institution has several Standards within the Improve level and is using results to inform continuous improvement and demonstrate sustainability. An IEQ of 275 and above indicates the institution is beginning to reach the Impact level and is engaged in practices that are sustained over time and are becoming ingrained in the culture of the institution.

Below is the average (range) of all Cognia Improvement Network (CIN) institutions evaluated for accreditation in the last five years. The range of the annual CIN IEQ average is presented to enable you to benchmark your results with other institutions in the network.

Insights from the Review

The Engagement Review Team engaged in professional discussions and deliberations about the processes, programs, and practices within the institution to arrive at the findings of the team. These findings are organized around themes guided by the evidence, with examples of programs and practices, and suggestions for the institution's continuous improvement efforts. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide contextualized information from the team's deliberations and analysis of the practices, processes, and programs of the institution organized by the levels of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. The narrative also provides the next steps to guide the institution's improvement journey in its efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Accreditation Engagement Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on its current improvement efforts and to adapt and adjust their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

The Engagement Review Team (team) for Rome City Schools identified five themes aligned to continuous improvement. These themes represent both strengths and opportunities to guide the system's improvement journey. The team identified themes around the alignment of actions and purpose statements, leadership, data use, curriculum and instruction, and use of resources.

System initiatives are aligned to the purpose statements. Interviews with all stakeholder groups confirmed the purpose statement is at the forefront of all decision-making. Community members, parents, and internal stakeholders expressed familiarity with the mission statement. Stakeholders cited the statement without prompting from team members, confirming its embeddedness in all decision-making and behaviors. The system's continuous improvement plan targets specific actions aligned to the mission, that all students will graduate prepared for college and work. The improvement plan includes goals, activities, metrics, timelines, resources, and a process to monitor and adjust it in response to data. The expansion of Career, Technical, and Agriculture Education (CTAE) courses and pathways from 5 to 25 in recent years aligns to the purpose statement. In addition, the increased offerings of Advanced Placement (AP) courses and dual enrollment opportunities reflects a commitment to prepare students for college. A goal identified in the strategic plan is to expand CTAE, AP, and dual enrollment classes while closing the achievement gap to ensure all students have equitable opportunities. The team's review of data indicated the diverse student population is reflected in enrollment in these course offerings. Some schools have certified Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs to support student learning in science and mathematics. Leaders identified improvement in graduation rate as a priority. System leaders disaggregate graduation data to guide decisions about programs and services to improve the rate for all students. The expansion of courses to meet individual student goals guides decisions to provide a wide range of offerings to meet students' interests to improve the graduation rate. A leader commented about the intentional focus on the development of a system culture around the purpose statement that is pervasive throughout the system. The Phoenix Learning Center (PLC) provides an alternative educational model for students who have not experienced success in a traditional high school setting. The commitment of the system leadership and governing board to the PLC reflects the shared vision of providing all students with learning experiences to prepare them for the next level. The comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is among the programs implemented to ensure students' needs are met. The system implemented the Positive Behavior Incentive Program (PBIS) at all levels with a focus on behavior and good decision-making among students. The extensive array of extracurricular activities provides students with experiences to

explore interests and develop skills and talents in the arts, athletics, and leadership. Programs including the Young Scholars Program supports opportunities for middle school students to engage in rigorous summer programs. The new College and Career Academy reflects the system's commitment to allocating the resources necessary to support the purpose. Stakeholders expressed a shared pride in student opportunities to engage in high quality programs in academics, arts, and athletics.

Community stakeholders confirmed the community's commitment to the system and its initiatives. Community members described the various advisory committees on which they served. One community member commented that the system not only engages stakeholders in its planning, but that school leaders also serve on community boards to increase awareness of system initiatives and support community activities. The superintendent includes stakeholders in many advisory councils including local clergy, parents, students, community, and business leaders. As new career pathways are researched, system leaders include local business and industry leaders in the decision-making process to ensure courses are representative of the local business climate and employment opportunities. Collaboration between the system and local medical facilities resulted in an expansion of course offering and services. Business and community leaders identified the need for improved soft skills among job applicants. Strategies to address these skills were incorporated into improvement plans. Stakeholder feedback is regularly collected, analyzed, and used to guide the monitoring and adjusting of programs. Stakeholder feedback from the Georgia Climate Survey, Cognia surveys, and locally developed surveys provide information to the system in the planning, development, and evaluation of programs and services. All schools have implemented a structure to ensure students have an adult advocate. High school students indicated the advocacy programs encourage and support students, as they navigate and resolve educational and personal issues. As programs and services are monitored and adjusted, the team encourages system leaders to expand certified STEM programs to all schools. Leaders should identify a comprehensive process to monitor the effectiveness of advocacy programs with defined metrics to evaluate programs at all levels. Although the system monitors graduation rates and collects follow-up data, a process to assess student success at the next level should be formalized and implemented. The team encourages the system leaders to continue to assess the need to add additional AP, CTAE, and dual enrollment options. The team encourages the system to continue a laser focus to identify the learning needs of a changing student population to ensure courses and programs are developed and implemented to prepare all students for college and work.

Committed, forward-thinking leaders support programs and services that ensure all decisions are student centered. Parents, teachers, and community representatives described board members and system leaders who are consistently focused on growth and improvement. One stakeholder commented that "good things happen where good people are." The governing board adheres to policies and practices that follow all laws and regulations. Board retreats provide an opportunity for members to review data, review policies, and engage in discussions focused on supporting student-centered programs and services. The written code of ethics guides decision-making and board actions. All board members participate in regular training to ensure understanding of the code of ethics and the roles and responsibilities of members. Stakeholders described the superintendent and cabinet leaders as visionaries with an intentional focus on student-centered decision-making. A parent commented that the most outstanding feature of the system was the excellence of leadership at every level. The team noted all system leaders embrace and celebrate the diverse student population. Leaders review demographic data to determine effective strategies to address the constantly evolving changes in the student population. In recent years, the number of students in the English as a Second Language (ESOL) program has increased. In response to this change, ESOL programs and services have been expanded. A wide range of advisory groups provide input to system leaders. The superintendent regularly convenes councils including the Technology Committee, Parent Advisory Council, Student Advisory Committee, and the Community Round Table to collect perception information, share system initiatives, and gather

input for new programs and services. The system routinely collects stakeholder surveys. The data from the surveys are analyzed, used in decision-making, and the results are shared with the school community. Leaders support stakeholder engagement through parent-teacher organizations, booster clubs, and advisory groups. The continuous improvement planning process engages internal and external stakeholders. Students commented that decisions are student centered, and their voice “at the table” is valued and heard.

A systematic improvement process includes the development of a strategic plan, a system continuous improvement plan, and school improvement plans at each building. The team found internal stakeholders focused on continually assessing programs, practices, and services to determine strategies to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. Stakeholder interviews identified a common thread among all system and school leaders that was a consistent, concentrated emphasis on improvement. The instructional round table protocol provides opportunities for system leaders to review practices at each school and give meaningful feedback to guide improvement efforts. The protocol ensures the process is non-threatening for school staff and offers guidance as the school implements, monitors, and adjusts initiatives. School leaders implemented a similar process for building leaders and teachers to monitor and adjust programs to ensure programs and practices align to school improvement plans. System leaders conduct mid-year and final meetings to monitor the school’s progress in attaining their goals. A formalized quality assurance process ensures the quality and fidelity of the implementation of the system’s educational and operational expectations at all schools. Regular meetings between school and system leaders assess each school’s progress and alignment with system priorities. The implementation of FLEX days was developed in response to teacher and staff input. An analysis of data from the cost of substitute teachers, the need for professional development for staff, and the concern about meeting student learning needs when the teacher was not present, was instrumental in the development of FLEX days. The collaboration among staff to design the FLEX days resulted in a program that addresses all the identified needs. In addition, the money saved from the use of substitutes will be used for teacher tuition reimbursement. The team recognized this comprehensive and collaborative effort of all staff with the support of the board characterizes the “team effort” described by system leaders.

Leaders implement staff evaluation and observation processes to improve professional practice. The system uses the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) protocols of evaluation. The system uses the process and adheres to the protocols to formally evaluate staff. Leaders give feedback to teachers regarding the information from the evaluation results. Classroom observations by system and school leaders monitor instructional practice. Peer observations provide additional data points for improvement in instructional practice. Feedback is provided after all observations. System and school leaders provide support for teachers as needed. Teachers described the observation process as helpful, with a focus on continuous improvement. Data from evaluations and observations are collected and used to inform decisions about professional learning. Professional learning targets improvement in instructional practice and organizational effectiveness. Professional learning activities are monitored and adjusted to ensure all staff have sufficient opportunities to apply the intended learning. The hiring process includes clearly defined protocols and strategies to recruit quality staff. The system process includes a job fair specific to the system. A robust induction program for new teachers is outlined in the New Beginnings Program. A comprehensive mentoring program provides guidelines and protocols for mentoring. A mentor is assigned to all new teachers. The mentor remains with the teacher for up to three years to provide support and assistance. When budget constraints required changes in the coaching program, all school and system leaders collaborated to redefine the program to ensure coaching support was consistent across the district. System and school leaders identified the implementation of experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness as a priority. The intentional “grow our own leaders” philosophy

was expressed by system leaders. An Aspiring Leaders Program fosters leadership growth. School leaders identify staff members to lead professional learning sessions. Teachers regularly serve on committees and as instructional leaders. Although developing leadership capacity among staff is a priority, the team found limited data to monitor and adjust existing programs for fidelity for implementation. The team reviewed comprehensive standard operating procedures (SOPs) in handbooks, but a formalized process to monitor the practices or specific criteria on which to base decisions regarding revisions was limited. Leaders discussed an informal process using anecdotal data; however, the team did not review specific protocols to ensure SOPs are monitored and adjusted systematically. The team suggests specific protocols be developed for monitoring SOPs to determine effectiveness. The system leaders and board are encouraged to continue to update the scorecard and share the information with stakeholders to ensure transparency. Although the system utilizes multiple stakeholder engagement strategies, the team encourages leaders and staff to continuously assess effective ways to engage all members of the school community.

The curriculum and instruction are focused on student learning and growth. Stakeholders stated that excellence was the goal of all academic programs. Course offerings include programs to support over 25 career pathways, extensive AP courses, dual enrollment, special education, and ESOL initiatives. The ESOL program utilizes the push-in sheltered model to support students. Curriculum maps and pacing guides provide direction for instruction. Teachers commented that the system-wide use of pacing guides ensures transient students do not experience learning gaps. The vertical curriculum planning makes sure transitions from one level to the next are seamless. Formalized processes guide vertical planning. Instructional leaders monitor the alignment of curriculum, resources, and instruction. Data from formative and summative assessments are collected, analyzed, and used to monitor and adjust the curriculum and instructional practice for fidelity of implementation. System instructional rounds provide meaningful feedback to teachers and building leaders about the curriculum and instruction. System leaders offer targeted assistance to make sure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices. Teachers and leaders at all schools participate in collaborative learning communities to review student learning data, curriculum, lesson plans, and resources. Instructional leaders and teachers intentionally align the curriculum to the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Teachers align lesson plans to the standards.

The MTSS program identifies specific interventions to address learning needs of students. Consistent tier 1 protocols are used across the system. Schools personalize interventions at the tier 2 and 3 levels. Targeted remediation and interventions address student needs. A parent commented that the academic program is not just focused on one segment of the student population but offers programs for “all kinds of interests and abilities.” The co-teaching model allows collaboration among teachers to support students with identified learning needs. Students commented that the workshop model encourages self-direction. Teachers described cross-curricular assignments with a focus on creativity and innovation. A rigorous AP program affords highly motivated students to enroll in challenging courses. The extensive AP course offerings provide high quality courses in a wide range of subjects. Dual enrollment courses give students opportunities to enroll in courses from local colleges. The extensive career pathways program encourages students to take courses to prepare them for college or work. A comprehensive program to support education and career planning is embedded in course curriculums. The counseling department provides support to students in the college selection process and identification of potential career options. A senior commented that she is not ready to graduate because there are still so many good courses to take. The team reviewed a formalized process to evaluate resources used to support the curriculum. Weekly grade-level meetings review the curriculum and lesson plans. The system’s academic team identifies ways to support schools in the effective implementation of the curriculum. An afterschool, online tutoring program supports struggling students.

Parents of graduates observed that their students were well prepared for study at the next level. Parents and students discussed the value of PowerSchool with its timely information about student performance. Comments from parents cited the seamless transition from one building to the next as an important factor in student success. The ease of the transition from in-person to on-line learning for students contributed to reduced stress among students according to parents. The collaboration among students, teachers, and parents is celebrated by all stakeholders. Teachers meet regularly to discuss the curriculum and student performance data. Teachers communicate regularly with students and parents about academic performance. The team encourages the system to fully implement the Instructional Framework which is currently in draft form to ensure instructional practices are systematically implemented, monitored, and evaluated to improve instructional practice. Leaders should continue to evaluate the curriculum to ensure alignment with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Instructional leaders should continue to identify additional AP courses, career pathways, dual enrollment opportunities, and programs to address the special learning needs of students to ensure courses and programs align to the purpose statement.

Leaders intentionally align resources to strategic goals and priorities. A leader commented that resources support the whole child, and the goal is to remove obstacles for each student. System leaders allocate human, material, and fiscal resources to ensure programs and services support identified needs and priorities to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. Digital integration of technology in teaching, learning, and organizational initiatives targets improvement in student performance and efficient, effective operations. The Technology Plan guides decisions regarding integration of digital devices and programs to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness. A process to review and revise the plan informs decision-making about technology. The system's one-to-one Chromebook implementation has enabled teachers to provide meaningful instruction during periods of online learning. The proactive planning about online learning ensured teachers had the resources necessary to provide uninterrupted instruction. Jetpacks were made available to students who did not have access to the internet. The Rome CARES program provides support to meet individual student needs. A clothes closet, food pantry, and resources closet are among the resources to support students and families. The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in the use of resources to support the purpose and goals. The long-range planning ensures financial resources are available to meet unanticipated needs. A change in regulations regarding bus transportation required the system to purchase buses with little advance notice. The responsible fiscal planning enabled the system to purchase the required number of buses without impacting other programs. System leaders align staffing to student needs. The proactive approach used in staffing allocation is designed to anticipate demographic shifts. A comprehensive facility plan guides planning based on strategic system goals. The team reviewed processes to monitor all plans regarding the allocation and use of resources based on analysis of data. Grants from external agencies and organizations to support student learning are actively pursued. Leaders use stakeholder feedback in the effective management of resources. Leaders utilize a comprehensive process to evaluate all resources to monitor effectiveness to determine if there is a need to eliminate or revise existing materials or programs. The resource evaluation process includes protocols to identify additional resources to support student learning or organizational effectiveness. A leader stated that all resources must be evidence based.

The board and system leaders use a formalized, systematic budget process to guide fiscal planning. Leaders collect input from internal and external stakeholders in the comprehensive process. Board members approve the budget and provide oversight for financial decisions. Stakeholders stated the board and system leaders are responsible stewards of the financial resources of the system. Voters have supported Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) referendums which have enabled the system to provide facilities aligned to the purpose statements. Leaders allocate funds to support a

variety of summer learning programs. Outside agencies and programs provide targeted resources to support system initiatives. For example, the local medical centers provide support to programs in the College and Career Academy. Funding is aligned to goals in the strategic plan. Staffing to support reduction in class size, clinical counselors at the schools, and School Resource Officers reflects commitment to the goals in the improvement plans. The team encourages the system to continue to evaluate all resources to determine effectiveness and usefulness and to eliminate resources that do not support system or school goals. Leaders are encouraged to continue to evaluate hiring practices to ensure staff members meet system needs. Leaders are encouraged to conduct a comprehensive root cause analysis regarding staff retention and design additional strategies to retain qualified staff. The board and system leaders are encouraged to continue to allocate all human, material, and fiscal resources to ensure intentional alignment with system goals and priorities. Surveys to continually assess internet access for students should be conducted. Leaders should identify strategies to ensure all students have internet connection.

The system embraces a data-driven culture. Data are consistently used to inform improvement planning, evaluation of programs and practices, and instructional practice. A formalized data team protocol includes guidelines for the analysis and use of data. Data teams guide collaborative planning. Staff at all schools participates in data teams which meet regularly to review and analyze student learning data. Grade-level data team meetings focus on student performance data to inform decisions about instruction and programs. Student learning data are maintained over time and trends are identified. A system-wide annual data retreat includes protocols to review and analyze data from all schools to determine progress toward improvement goals. Leaders identify next steps to address programs and practices to support improvement based on the analysis of the data. Board members described activities during retreats to review data that are used to monitor policies and programs. A scorecard that records data associated with all improvement initiatives is maintained and shared with the community. The strategic plan was developed in response to analysis of data. System leaders identified improvement goals based on data to ensure alignment with the purpose statement. Leaders reviewed longitudinal data about student performance, graduation rate, student demographics, staff retention, and stakeholder feedback to identify priorities, define actions, metrics, and measures to monitor improvement. Data are disaggregated to monitor progress of student subgroups. A formalized process to revise improvement planning includes data protocols to monitor and adjust the plan in response to data. Data from teacher evaluations and observations are used to develop professional learning activities. Changes in student demographics guide decisions about programs to meet student learning needs. For example, a significant increase in the number of non-English speaking students required additional ESOL staff and support programs. Decisions to increase services for these students were based on the collection and analysis of data.

Instructional leaders analyze data from assessments including Georgia Milestones, AP, dual enrollment grades, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), SAT, and Fountas and Pinnal to monitor student learning and to develop strategies and programs to monitor the curriculum and instructional practice. Data are disaggregated to monitor improvement of subgroups. Data gathered in instructional rounds are used to identify additional support needed from system leaders. The MTSS program uses data to determine interventions and assess student progress. Common grading practices rely on data to ensure consistency across courses and classes. A teacher commented that teachers and leaders start with data to determine the course on which to embark and then use it to ensure the system is on the right track. Data are used throughout the system to monitor organizational effectiveness. Data from the food services, transportation, finance, maintenance, and technology departments are collected and used to ensure the operating practices are effective and efficient. The data from these departments are used to modify and adjust protocols and practices to ensure efficient operations. Data from behavior and attendance are data points used to evaluate the PBIS program. A principal commented that data drives

what we do next. Although data about graduates are maintained, additional data regarding success at the next level could ensure courses and pathways are meeting students' needs and interests. The team encourages the system to continue to collect longitudinal data from student performance and organizational effectiveness to determine progress toward achieving improvement goals. The team suggests system leaders continue to identify targeted data to monitor all improvement initiatives. Leaders are encouraged to conduct a root cause analysis about programs to improve teacher retention, student advocacy programs, and programs to develop leadership capacity among staff. Leaders are encouraged to continue to use data to develop, monitor, and adjust all programs, practices, and services aligned to the strategic plan, system improvement plans, and school improvement plans.

The themes identified by the Engagement Review Team should be considered along with the rest of the findings from the review as a part of the system's continuous improvement process. They provide next steps to guide the improvement journey to improve quality and opportunity for all learners. Leaders are encouraged to refer to the key concepts in the Cognia Performance Standards to guide improvement. In addition to the ratings for each Standard, ratings for each key concept provide additional information about each component of the i3 Rubric.

Next Steps

Upon receiving the Accreditation Engagement Review Report, the institution is encouraged to implement the following steps:

- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Develop plans to address the areas for improvement identified by the Engagement Review Team.
- Use the findings and data from the report to guide and strengthen the institution's continuous improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report.
- Continue the improvement journey.

Team Roster

The Engagement Review Teams are comprised of professionals with varied backgrounds and expertise. To provide knowledge and understanding of the Cognia tools and processes, all Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members are required to complete Cognia training. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
<p>Holly Wingard, Lead Evaluator</p>	<p>Holly Wingard, a Lead Evaluator for Cognia, currently chairs teams throughout the United States and the Middle East. Though retired from Spartanburg School District Three in South Carolina, she remains active, serving as a consultant for systems preparing for Engagement Reviews and as a facilitator for systems in the development of strategic plans. Ms. Wingard worked in both a large urban school district and a small rural system. She worked as a teacher, counselor, and gifted and talented coordinator. During her 34-year educational career, she also worked with the accountability department and served on administrative teams. Ms. Wingard earned a Bachelor of Arts in sociology from the University of Georgia and a Master of Education in student personnel from the University of South Carolina. Her masters plus 30 includes courses taken from the University of South Carolina, Converse College, and The Citadel in counseling, administration, and teacher evaluation. Ms. Wingard served on Diagnostic Review Teams in South Carolina and led monitoring reviews. She has been a Cognia Improvement Consultant for North Carolina and currently serves on the South Carolina Cognia Council.</p>
<p>Kelly Bonds</p>	<p>Kelly Bonds is entering her 27th year in education with Albertville City Schools in Albertville, Alabama. Currently, she is the district instructional coach for literacy, ELA, and social studies. In the past, Mrs. Bonds taught eighth-grade English for 11 years and worked as an assistant principal for 12 years at both the elementary and secondary levels. Mrs. Bonds received her Bachelor of Science in English and history from Jacksonville State University and her Master of Science in history and her post-master's certificate in educational leadership from the University of Alabama. Mrs. Bonds has served as a team member for several accreditation engagement reviews.</p>

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
<p>Linda Grise-Grace, Associate Lead Evaluator</p>	<p>Mrs. Grace, MBA, MSE, has been actively engaged in the educational field for over 20 years, as both an administrator and instructor. Administrative and academic responsibilities have included overseeing all instruction and facets of curriculum, identifying and scheduling professional development, conducting research to identify resources that best align with curriculum to continuously improve student learning, developing and implementing an emergency response program for the school with guidance from local authorities and GEMA, and daily inspection of school facility and managing operations to consistently ensure a safe and secure learning environment. Financial responsibilities have included oversight of day-to-day operations, as well as monthly financial reporting, preparation of annual budget, and development efforts, including annual fund and grant applications. Accreditation and Licensure responsibilities have included coordination of the initial accreditation and renewal of ongoing accreditation for schools -- SACS Accreditation (including Pre-Kindergarten); successfully completed dual SAIS/SACS Accreditation, subsequent renewal of SAIS/SACS Accreditation, and (most recently) "AdvancED" Accreditation. Submission of application for state licensure of both pre-kindergarten and after school programs and successfully granted licensure from the State of Georgia ("Bright from the Start" Agency). Mrs. Grace is currently employed by Gwinnett County Public Schools.</p>
<p>Katherine Kelbaugh</p>	<p>Dr. Katherine Kelbaugh, founding principal of The Museum School of Avondale Estates, serves as the school's executive director. Dr. Kelbaugh holds a B.S. degree in early childhood education from Georgia Southern University, where she graduated magna cum laude. She earned a M.Ed. in educational psychology, with a concentration in gifted and creative education, from the University of Georgia, where she also attained leadership certification. Dr. Kelbaugh holds a Ph.D. in educational administration and policy from the University of Georgia. Kelbaugh began her career teaching first grade and kindergarten in Georgia before teaching third grade in Florida. There, she served as the lead teacher, mentor teacher, and reading specialist before taking on the role of assistant principal. Dr. Kelbaugh served as a team member for Cognia during several school-based reviews. Following the Museum School's successful Cognia engagement review, she was asked to present at the regional Cognia conference.</p>

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