



New Rockford-Sheyenne School District

New Rockford, North Dakota

October 12-14, 2021

System Accreditation Engagement Review

259483

Table of Contents

Cognia Continuous Improvement System	2
Initiate.....	2
Improve.....	2
Impact.....	2
Cognia Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review	3
Cognia Standards Diagnostic Results	3
Leadership Capacity Domain	4
Learning Capacity Domain	5
Resource Capacity Domain.....	6
Assurances.....	7
Accreditation Status and Index of Education Quality®	7
Insights from the Review	8
Next Steps	10
Team Roster	11
References and Readings.....	12

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.									Insufficient
	EN:	1	IM:	1	RE:	1	SU:	1	EM:	
1.2	Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the system's purpose and desired outcomes for learning.									Improving
	EN:	2	IM:	2	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	
1.3	The system engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.									Initiating
	EN:	3	IM:	1	RE:	1	SU:	1	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:	3	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.									Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
1.7	Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the system's purpose and direction.									Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	2	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	
1.9	The system provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	2	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.									Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	

Leadership Capacity Standards										Rating
1.11	Leaders implement a quality assurance process for their institutions to ensure system effectiveness and consistency.									Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	2	RE:	2	SU:	2	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:	3	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving.									Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	2	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	
2.3	The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs, and skills needed for success.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	2	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.									Improving
	EN:	2	IM:	2	RE:	2	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:	3	EM:	
2.6	The system implements a process to ensure the curriculum is clearly aligned to standards and best practices.									Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the system's learning expectations.									Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	
2.8	The system provides programs and services for learners' educational futures and career planning.									Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	

2.9	The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners.	Improving									
	EN: 3 IM: 3 RE: 3 SU: 3 EM: 3										
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.	Improving									
	EN: 3 IM: 3 RE: 3 SU: 2 EM: 3										
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to the demonstrable improvement of student learning.	Improving									
	EN: 3 IM: 3 RE: 2 SU: 2 EM: 2										
2.12	The system implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.	Improving									
	EN: 2 IM: 2 RE: 2 SU: 2 EM: 3										

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.	Improving									
	EN: 3 IM: 3 RE: 2 SU: 2 EM: 3										
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: 3 RE: 3 SU: 3 EM: 3										
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.	Insufficient									
	EN: 1 IM: 1 RE: 1 SU: 1 EM: 1										
3.4	The system attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the system's purpose and direction.	Improving									
	EN: 3 IM: 3 RE: 2 SU: 2 EM: 3										
3.5	The system integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.	Improving									
	EN: 3 IM: 2 RE: 2 SU: 2 EM: 2										
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: 3 RE: 3 SU: 3 EM: 3										

Resource Capacity Standards										Rating
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.									Initiating
	EN:	2	IM:	2	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	
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.									Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	3	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	

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.

Institution IEQ	295.48	CIN 5 Year IEQ Range	278.34 – 283.33
------------------------	---------------	-----------------------------	------------------------

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 identified six themes aligned to the continuous improvement process at New Rockford School District. These themes present both strengths and opportunities to guide the improvement journey the school is actively pursuing. Interviews and a study of artifacts produced supporting evidence for each theme. Given the COVID pandemic, this review was facilitated remotely and did not allow classroom observations to occur. Therefore, ratings from the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool (eleot) did not inform the Standards' ratings.

The district has not committed to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners. Evidence includes an outdated vision and mission statement, an inability to articulate the district's vision and mission by several stakeholders, and statements during interviews that the district vision and mission statements need to be revised. Vision and mission statements provide districts with an overview of where they want to go and what they want to be. They establish clear expectations and standards for the whole district community and help the district reach common goals. The team suggests that the district begin a process to create a new vision and mission statement that accurately reflects the current state of the school district, based on a needs assessment. Leaders are encouraged to invite representatives from the community, school board, staff members, parents and students to participate in the review and revision of the purpose statements. Each representative has a unique view point about how they want the district to help serve the community in which they live. The team suggests leaders develop strategies to share the new vision and mission with the community and display it throughout the district.

Rated at the insufficient level, New Rockford School District lacks induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. Through interviews and lack of documents, it was evident that the district does not currently have a formal coaching and mentoring program. The main focus of coaching and mentoring conversations for school improvement is to build the competency and capability of teachers, so that they can take steps towards achieving the district's strategic vision and priorities in the curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment, and can effectively make judgments about students' progress and outcomes. The team encourages system leaders consider completing an accredited coaching or mentoring training program. Leaders are encouraged to develop a process to ensure there is an expectation among the district staff that they practice a culture of continuous improvement and risk-taking based on a cycle of conversations, classroom observations, constructive feedback, and planning and implementing strategies that aim to

directly make a difference to classroom practices in line with the priorities identified for school improvement.

The district's continuous improvement plan does not include a process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice. Evidence from interviews and a review of documents indicate that although the district has developed a continuous improvement strategy map, it does not include a timeline, strategies, action plans, measureable goals, or a list of resources necessary to show evidence of improvement. In addition, the plan does not include a process for continuously assessing its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning. The team recommends that the school further develop its continuous improvement strategy map to move from the initiating phase of the Cognia i3 rubric to the improving phase. This phase involves the collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired results, and that those results consistently demonstrate growth and improvement over time. Targeted professional development may be developed and tied directly to the goals of the school improvement plan. In addition, it is important for all stakeholder groups to have knowledge of school improvement goals and the school's plan to address those goals. The system is encouraged to develop a detailed school improvement plan which includes representation from all stakeholder groups, including students, teachers, support staff, parents, community members, and school board.

The school district does not have a fully-developed strategic plan to demonstrate resource management that includes long-range planning and resource use to support the district's purpose and direction. Results of interviews and a study of documents indicated a lack of a formal process for long-range planning and resource management. Strategic planning is important to a school district because it provides a sense of direction, establishes a path to accomplish its desired future, creates a document suitable for public relations, gives the school district better control over external forces and the ability to anticipate and react to them, and serves as a tool for decision-making and resource allocation. The team encourages the school district to engage all stakeholders in a formalized process to further develop its strategic plan that includes strategic resource management of short- and long-range budgets, a facilities plan, technology plan, a K–12 aligned curriculum, professional development based on goals, an updated continuous improvement plan, and other organizational needs to support the district's vision and mission. Also, the team encourages the district to involve stakeholders through work on committees to develop the strategic plan and continuous improvement plan and to revisit the district vision and mission.

Maintaining a learner-centered environment is a priority for New Rockford School District. Through interviews and a review of documents, it is clear that the New Rockford School District is committed to focusing its time, resources, and energy on learners. Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning. Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the district. Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels. The district's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness. Finally, the district provides access to information, resources, and material to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the system. The team encourages leaders and staff continue practices that ensure the focus on the learner remains a priority.

The school board is highly effective and supports leadership, staff and students. Through interviews and a review of documents, it was clear that the school board establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support system effectiveness. Policies are revised and kept up-to-date. The school board adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities. District and school leadership indicated the school board gives leadership the autonomy

to manage the schools without interference from the school board. The school board also allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the district's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. The team encourages leaders and governing board members continue to adhere to established policies that support student learning and organizational effectiveness.

As the school continues on its improvement journey, the Engagement Review Team offers the following suggestions based on individual standards that did not align with any of the themes above. Leaders are encouraged to provide professional development opportunities for teachers to learn how to incorporate more 21st-century learning into their classrooms. Professional development that includes more training for teachers to integrate technology into curriculum areas for students' digital learning may ensure technology effectively impacts student learning. The team encourages leaders to review the formal evaluation process be expanded to include all staff, especially cooks, custodians, and bus drivers. Protocols to maintain documentation about formal evaluations in personnel files may improve the evaluation process. The team suggests practices to increase parental involvement by increasing school activities that involve parents may improve stakeholder engagement. The inclusion of parent representatives on committees and additional opportunities for parents to provide input into all facets of the district may impact stakeholder engagement in system initiatives. Leaders are encouraged to develop practices to share all survey results with stakeholders, pointing out strengths and areas in need of improvement.

The Engagement Review Team encourages system leaders and staff to review all ratings on the Cognia Performance Standards. By building upon strengths and prioritizing areas in need of improvement outlined in this report, the New Rockford School District has information to guide its continuous improvement journey.

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 professional experiences. All Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members complete Cognia training and elite certification to provide knowledge and understanding of the Cognia tools and processes. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

Team Member Name	Brief Biography (Lead Evaluator Only)
Mary Koopman Lead Evaluator	Dr. Mary Koopman is a certified assessor and lead trainer for the Rushmore Group, LLC, conducting assessments for individuals with special needs through the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. She works for the University of North Dakota teaching and learning department as a supervisor for student teachers in the field and has mentored new principals for the state. Dr. Koopman has over 36 years of experience in education and is a retired elementary and middle school principal from the Grand Forks Public School District in North Dakota. She earned a bachelor's degree in education, a master's degree in education, and a doctoral degree in educational leadership. Her many roles with Cognia include serving as a school and system lead evaluator at the state and national levels and conducting elite sweeps, readiness reviews, engagement reviews, and diagnostic reviews.
Chris Johnson Team Member	Educator at Thompson Public School
Brian Olson Team Member	Principal at Mohall-Lansford-Sherwood Public School

References and Readings

- AdvancED. (2015). Continuous Improvement and Accountability. Alpharetta, GA: AdvancED. Retrieved from <https://source.cognia.org/issue-article/continuous-improvement-and-accountability/>.
- Bernhardt, V., & Herbert, C. (2010). *Response to intervention and continuous school improvement: Using data, vision, and leadership to design, implement, and evaluate a schoolwide prevention program*. New York: Routledge.
- Elgart, M. (2015). *What a continuously improving system looks like*. Alpharetta, GA: AdvancED. Retrieved from <https://source.cognia.org/issue-article/what-continuously-improving-system-looks/>.
- Elgart, M. (2017). *Meeting the promise of continuous improvement: Insights from the AdvancED continuous improvement system and observations of effective schools*. Alpharetta, GA: AdvancED. Retrieved from <https://source.cognia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CISWhitePaper.pdf>.
- Evans, R. (2012). *The Savvy school change leader*. Alpharetta, GA: AdvancED. Retrieved from <https://source.cognia.org/issue-article/savvy-school-change-leader/>.
- Fullan, M. (2014). *Leading in a culture of change personal action guide and workbook*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hall, G., & Hord, S. (2001). *Implementing change: Patterns, principles, and potholes*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2006). *Sustainable leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kim, W., & Mauborne, R. (2017). *Blue ocean shift: Beyond competing*. New York: Hachette Book Group.
- Park, S, Hironaka, S; Carver, P, & Nordstrum, L. (2013). *Continuous improvement in education*. San Francisco: Carnegie Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/carnegie-foundation_continuous-improvement_2013.05.pdf.
- Sarason, S. (1996). *Revisiting the culture of the school and the problem of change*. New York: Teachers College.
- Schein, E. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Von Bertalanffy, L. (1968). *General systems theory*. New York: George Braziller, Inc.

