

**Report of the  
Quality Assurance Review Team  
for  
Floyd County School System**

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Rome, Georgia, United States 30161-2938

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*North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.*

# Quality Assurance Review Report

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## About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

**Background.** Founded in 1895, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and Schools (SACS CASI) accredit public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, Latin America, and the Department of Defense Schools worldwide.

In 2006, NCA CASI, SACS CASI, and the research and development arm of the accrediting associations, the National Study of School Evaluation, unified to form AdvancED. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 23,000 schools in 65 countries, serving 15 million students.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI and SACS CASI have defined shared, research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help schools, school districts, and educational service agencies continuously improve.

**The Accreditation Process.** To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, school districts and their schools must:

**1) Meet the AdvancED Standards and Policies for Quality School Systems.** School districts demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards and policies which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

**2) Engage in continuous improvement.** School districts and their schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose that the school district is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school and district effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).

**3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** School districts and schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, school districts host an external quality assurance review team once every five years. The team evaluates the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the school district improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school district and a written report detailing the team's required actions. The school district acts on the team's required actions and submits a progress report two years following the review.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI accreditation engages the entire school district community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help school districts and their schools maximize student success and improve organizational effectiveness

# Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

**Purpose.** The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

1. Evaluate the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards and policies.
2. Assess the efficacy of the district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions to improve the district and its schools.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation for review by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

A key aim of the Quality Assurance Review is to verify that the school district is operating with institutional integrity - that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students.

**School District Preparation.** To prepare for the Quality Assurance Review, the school district and the community complete the AdvancED Standards Assessment Report. The report engages the district in an in-depth self assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. The school district identifies and describes the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each standard. Through this internal review, the school district examines how its systems and processes contribute to student performance and school district effectiveness.

**Summary of Team Activities.** The Quality Assurance Review Team is led by an AdvancED certified District Lead Evaluator and comprised of professionals from outside the school district. The team reviews the findings of the school district's internal self-assessment, conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders, reviews student performance data and other documentation provided by the school district, and observes practices and daily operations. The team engages in professional deliberations to reach consensus on the school district's adherence to the standards for accreditation. The team provides an oral exit report and prepares a written Quality Assurance Review Team Report designed to help the school district and its schools improve.

**The Quality Assurance Review Team Report.** Following the visit, the review team completes the Quality Assurance Review report. After review by a nationally-trained reader, the report is submitted to the district. The report contains commendations and required actions for improvement.

**Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions.** The school district uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school district is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The AdvancED State Office is available to assist the school district in addressing the required actions. Following the Quality Assurance Review Team visit, the school district must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress it has made on the team's required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school district is addressing the required actions.

**Accreditation Recommendation.** The Quality Assurance Review team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed at the state level and by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school district following action from the commission.

## Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the SACS CASI Georgia State Office (SACS-CASI-GA), a division of AdvancED, visited Floyd County School System on 03/06/2011 - 03/09/2011.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 56 administrators, 121 teachers, 35 support staff, 83 parents and business partners, 89 students, and 4 Board of Education members for a total of 388 stakeholders. In addition to meeting with district personnel and stakeholders, the team visited 6 schools within the school district. During the school visits, team members interviewed school stakeholders, observed classrooms, and reviewed relevant school artifacts. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the district. Specifically, the team examined the district's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED standards focus on systems with a school district and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of the standards lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards. The Quality Assurance Review Team used the AdvancED standards to guide its review of the school district, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school district and its schools function as a whole and embody the practices and characteristics of a quality school district.

Through its examination of the school district's adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review Team prepared reports on each standard, highlighting strengths and suggestions for improvement specific to each standard. These reports can be found following this summary.

The Quality Assurance Review Team also examined the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance. The team reviewed the district's practices and methods to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results. The team's findings in this area can be found following the standard reports.

The team used the standard reports and quality assurance findings to identify common themes, significant accomplishments, and pressing needs facing the district. These became the basis for the overall commendations and required actions that are provided below. The commendations and required actions should serve as the focus for the district as it acts on the team's findings. They represent the areas that the team believes will have the greatest impact in helping the district further its improvement efforts. The standard reports and quality assurance findings can be used to help reinforce and enrich the district's understanding of the commendations and required actions.

## Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the Floyd County School System for the following strengths and accomplishments. While additional strengths are noted in the detailed review of each standard that appears later in this report, the commendations listed below are the strengths that the team believes are most deserving of being highlighted.

- **The strong relationships between community and the schools have been developed by communicating with those being served, thus bringing the schools and community together, paving the way for the great things that are happening in Floyd County Schools.**

The bonds between the public and schools are constantly and intentionally strengthened by the district through school and district events, an intense focus on transparency and communication with stakeholders through digital media, letters, bulletin boards, flyers, posters, banners, radio, television, and print media, and the open door policy at the central office and schools.

The result of these efforts is trust and the shared purpose that support the system in the education of students.

- **The strong relationships with post-secondary institutions and the business community have shaped a curriculum through which students can reach success and enjoy a quality life regardless of their career choice.**

The transformation of the Floyd County Technical High School to the Floyd County College and Career Academy was the result of a partnership between Floyd County Schools, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, and the Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce. This endeavor has become the model for other institutional and business relationships that support the mission, "Quality Education for a Quality Life."

Floyd County School District has deliberately developed an educational system that prepares students for success in life regardless of the path they choose for the future.

- **The unique relationship between the Board of Education and the superintendent has resulted in strong, courageous, and proactive leadership as the system responded to major reductions in revenue without reduction in force or cancellation of academic programs.**

All stakeholders are aware of and able to describe how the school board and superintendent together have faced the challenges of the district, collaboratively and creatively using the vision, mission, and the powers of the respective offices to find not only solutions, but innovations that have moved the district rapidly forward.

There is great public trust in the school system because of the transparency and agility of system leaders in dealing with district issues.

- **The deep level of collaboration, refined during the charter process and now evident in every part of the system, has fostered and sustained the far-reaching levels of processes supporting teaching and learning.**

All stakeholders know from experience that their voices will be heard and their opinions valued regardless of the venue or issue.

Sustained collaboration at these levels bring together the knowledge and experience of the entire community, resulting in deeply embedded understandings and assessments, creative and sustained solutions to challenges, highly developed programs and initiatives, and high level teaching, learning, and student performance.

- **The common sense, hands on, collaborative, visionary approach inspired by the superintendent, combined with the honesty and transparency of the district with all stakeholders through “intentional listening” actions, have elevated the quality of district initiatives, resulting in the intense focus on students and achievement.**

All stakeholders voice their trust in and support of the superintendent, indicating that they appreciate the way she leads people, inspires them to perform to their best, and values every individual.

Strong public support for visionary leadership is crucial in driving a high performing, well-developed system such as Floyd County to even higher performance.

## Required Actions

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following required actions for improvement. The team focused its required actions on those areas that, if addressed, will have the greatest impact on improving student performance and overall effectiveness of the school district. The Floyd County School System will be held accountable for making progress on each of the required actions noted in this section. Following this review, the school district will be asked to submit a progress report on these required actions. The district should refer to the detail provided in the standard reports for guidance and greater depth on the required actions.

- **Complete the process of Central Office reorganization and realignment with the vision and mission.**

The district has yet to complete the District Office restructuring that is identified in the Strategic Plan.

Streamlining the positions in the Central Office to reduce expenditures and eliminate redundancy and overlap of responsibilities will streamline the system, cut costs, increase efficiency, and more effectively support school level operations.

- **Review and revise the technology plan to ensure equitable and ongoing implementation of instructional technology throughout the system.**

Technology is unequally distributed across the system.

Teachers and students should have equitable access to learning technologies, regardless of the site or situation, to support teaching and learning.

- **Develop the data management system further to promote consistency of analysis and delivery to the classroom level to better inform teaching and learning.**

Analysis and distribution of student performance and other data is unequal across the system.

Consistent analysis and delivery of data driven teaching strategies and methods deepens and promotes

understanding of student learning issues.

**Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools:** The team reviewed the district's adherence to each of the AdvancED standards. The findings from this review are provided in the next section of this report.

## Next Steps

The school district should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the commendations section to maximize their impact on the school district.
3. Develop action plans to address the required actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the required actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school district's efforts to improve student performance and district effectiveness.
5. Two years following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. Lack of progress can result in a change in accreditation status.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

## Resources

AdvancED offers a range of resources to support your school district as it acts on the findings in this report. The AdvancED Resource Network, available at [www.advanc-ed.org/resourcenetwork](http://www.advanc-ed.org/resourcenetwork), provides an online network of peer-to-peer practices, best practices, and resources and tools designed to help school districts and their schools with continuous improvement.

## Celebrating Accreditation

Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review Team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for review and action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and communicates it to the school district. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school district should celebrate its achievement with the community. Flags, door decals, diploma seals, and other related items can be ordered from the website to help you share your accomplishment with your community.

**Summary**

The accreditation process engages the school district, its schools, and community in an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. The next steps in this journey are to build on the commendations and address the required actions noted in this report. Doing so will enable the school district to advance in its quest for excellence and deepen the fulfillment of its mission for all students.

# Standards for Accreditation

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the district demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

The Quality Assurance Review Team divided into standard teams to review each standard and prepare a standards report summarizing the team's findings. These standard reports, along with the quality assurance findings that follow these reports, provided the basis for the team's identification of over-arching commendations and required actions presented earlier in this report. The reports submitted by each team are provided on the following pages for the district's review and use. Each report reflects its respective team's unique voice, perspective, and deliberations. The reports can be used to help enrich and deepen the district's understanding of the overall commendations and required actions.

## Standard 1. Vision & Purpose

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

### Description:

The commitment to a shared mission was set in motion when the Floyd County School Board convened the Citizens Study Committee to explore Charter System possibilities. Through the work with stakeholders to establish the Charter System, Floyd County determined that the District should provide a school system to meet the ever changing educational needs of the community in a Twenty-First century economy. Floyd County Schools have goals for improving school achievement through effective instructional programs, providing a highly qualified staff to support all system programs, providing a safe and orderly learning environment, providing adequate resources to support all areas of system operations, involving all stakeholders in the decision making process, and integrating technology to enhance learning. Floyd County strengthened its belief system: "Our students will ensure the success of tomorrow and everyone's job is to impact the life and education of the child in a positive way," stated one employee, underscoring the commitment of district staff to their work. The Standards Assessment Report prepared for the Quality Assurance Review stated: "The successful charter system application was a direct response to listening to our constituencies request for increased accountability for student success, and increased local control in achieving our system vision."

The vision and mission of Floyd County Schools are clearly defined and thoroughly explained in the core mission and beliefs of the Charter District. Academic excellence and academic success of the students are top priorities in Floyd County Schools. The core mission and vision of the Floyd County School System are highly visible and articulated throughout the schools in the district. Embedded in their beliefs is the guiding principle of "a quality education for quality life." Although many leaders in the district can articulate the mission and vision and all personnel would reiterate, "a quality education for quality life," interviews with school personnel indicated work still to be done to extend ownership of the mission, especially with Charter System implications, to all instructional staff, parents, and the students themselves. Floyd County showed foresight in utilizing Georgia Law to establish the district as a leader in Georgia education by developing a system that strives to think, teach, and learn differently. As a result the school system has established important partnerships with parents, students, the Greater Rome business

community as well as the local Technical College.

The System Strategic Plan, a comprehensive guiding document that is easily accessible and understood by the general public, guides the implementation and assessment of the system goals. The Strategic Plan identifies five system-wide “areas of focus” which include specific strategies for reaching the goals as well as district measurements of success. The District promotes the strategic plan through the district website and materials distributed throughout the system and community. Floyd County maintains a profile of the district that guides the application of the Strategic Plan, decision making, and planning across the district. As a result of the Strategic Plan the district office is in the process of reorganizing the leadership at the district level, an effort intended to streamline the district system and more effectively and efficiently support teaching and learning.

The attainment of the Charter District provides possibilities for freedoms and innovations outside of Georgia school statutes for regular schools. Floyd County states that they are providing “outside-the-box” thinking for programs that causes strides to be made for all students. The superintendent stated that they are not only thinking outside the box, but have “thrown the box away,” indicating the willingness and capacity of the district to change and innovate.

Floyd County has completely committed to the shared purpose and direction. Stakeholders continuously voiced their belief in the students being productive citizens and living productive lives. The district has clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the vision. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. Community expectations support the autonomy of each school and the district provides a “family” philosophy in connecting and engaging themselves with the workforce. The school’s vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

The high level of collaboration across the district was noted throughout the accreditation visit. The superintendent and staff ensure that the district vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process. Strong evidence of commitment to the quality and innovative mission and vision are visible through the leadership of the superintendent and administrative district team who model the collaborative model for all stakeholders. A focus on two-way communication has increased the quality of the initiatives of the district and keeps the focus on the students and their achievement. Students report they understand the mission and their roles in working in school for productive futures: “The future is not all about college, but also about opening doors and creating multiple levels of opportunities for students and their success.”

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The district is committed to ensuring that the vision and mission guide the teaching and learning process as well as the strategic direction of the schools.
- The Floyd County business partners, School Board, and parents make it clear that the mission and vision represent a shared commitment to improvement of achievement and equitable access to quality educational programs for all students.
- Innovation and change is embraced throughout the district and is evidenced by distance learning between schools, the College and Career Academy, Business Partnerships, and real world application programs.
- Honesty and transparency in the work of the district and the emphasis on two-way communication maintains the focus on the students and their achievement.
- The charter system status has increased partnerships with local postsecondary institutions and business and industry expansion of the Charter Floyd County Schools College and Career Academy.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Develop more opportunities for stakeholder participation in future reviews and revisions of the vision and mission with an eye on the future and Floyd County's place in the international community.
- Assess continually all programs to determine their alignment with the vision and track the resources that go into these programs to maintain progress toward district goals.
- Expedite the reorganization of the leadership at the district level.
- Revisit the vision, mission, and goals of the district at regular intervals to maintain alignment and realize more innovative initiatives and programs.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Floyd County School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Vision & Purpose" standard.

## Standard 2. Governance & Leadership

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

**Description:**

Proactive and empathic leadership within the Floyd County School System is evident throughout the organization. Interviews with teachers, parents, students, and community stakeholders indicate that the leadership is transparent and that all groups feel that their voices and opinions are heard. An excellent network of internal and external stakeholders is evident when speaking with these groups. Expectations of the community as well as of the internal stakeholders reflect the vision and mission of the district, keeping the success and achievement of students as the primary goal. The open door leadership style permeates the entire organization, from the superintendent and the Board of Education to the employees at each school and throughout the district.

Highly developed procedures and processes are in place as a part of regular routine. These processes adhere to legal requirements and provide for effective and efficient operation of the school system so that all maintain the focus on students and their success.

The Superintendent and staff have created a leadership style in which employees truly feel that they are listened to, and their opinions are an integral part of the decision making process. Employees throughout the system report that their opinions are definitely heard and valued. There is a pervasive culture of ownership within the community and the school system with regard to decision-making at all levels. This ownership promotes high levels of trust within and among employees. In addition, the community holds the school system in high regard, and high expectations are held for the work of the system. The accreditation team noted the emphasis by the superintendent and staff on identifying and developing new leaders at the school level.

The Floyd County School Board is a powerful collaborative group and works closely with the superintendent to fully realize the potential of the charter system, develop policies and guidance that keep

the district aligned with the vision, mission, and Strategic Plan, and keep touch with stakeholders throughout the district. The close relationship between the superintendent and the school board was identified by district personnel as a key factor that has driven the system and student growth. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities that are understood and executed by the board maintain the momentum of the district by constantly directing decisions, initiatives, and thinking back to the vision and mission.

Local School Governance Teams (LSGT's) created by the charter system have been successfully initiated throughout the organization. Interviews with Team members and other stakeholders indicate strong support for this new aspect of governance. However, the need for understanding and clarification of roles and responsibilities of the Teams exists. This is an indication of the many yet to be developed aspects of the charter initiative.

Interviews with central officer leaders supported by the classroom observations revealed an overall plan for technology implementation but uneven implementation of technology across the district. Teachers who had technology in their classrooms used it well while some classrooms had only a couple of student and one teacher computer workstations per room. Technology use in the classroom typically was teacher centered although there were a few instances of highly engaged, interactive lessons. Initiatives to improve technology access were determined to be underway at the district level.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Employees throughout the system report that their opinions are heard and valued.
- The collaborative style of district leadership permeates all levels of the organization.
- The "open door" leadership policy is evident throughout all levels of the organization.
- Local School Governance Teams created through the charter system are supported by stakeholders and are improving levels of ownership and communication.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Revise the current technology plan into a focused, measurable, comprehensive initiative to address purchase, distribution, and replacement of technology to ensure equitable placement of the latest advances in teaching and learning.
- Ensure that professional development on the uses of technology in the classroom keep pace with acquisition and distribution.
- Continue to refine the leadership of the Local School Governance Teams so that the district realizes maximum benefits of charter system.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Floyd County School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Governance & Leadership" standard.

## Standard 3. Teaching & Learning

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

### **Description:**

Floyd County Schools maintains a central focus on and commitment to academic achievement for all students in the district. This focus is based upon the district's vision and mission of preparing students for life beyond high school and having high expectations for each student and each school. Staff members throughout the district are involved in decisions about the curriculum and its application. The district has implemented instructional strategies aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals.

The system has implemented standards based instructional strategies. Teachers report that the district has provided professional development opportunities through the Beth Reynolds' Assessment for Learning program. Classroom observations throughout the system showed evidence of standards posted in most every classroom, use of content-related word walls and essential questions, display of student work with teacher comment, and effective teaching strategies such as re-grouping and cooperative learning activities.

High levels of student engagement were observed throughout the system during classroom observations. Classroom observations and student interviews also indicated a high level of interaction between teachers and students. A pervasive atmosphere of support and caring was found in all classrooms and schools and is conducive to a positive learning environment for all students. There is a strong collaborative learning environment throughout the district which facilitates and supports student achievement and engagement.

The system has implemented several intervention strategies and programs to increase student achievement and raise the graduation rate. The system calendar provides for intercessions where all students can receive remediation and additional instruction. A strong mentoring program has been established in schools to provide encouragement and guidance for at-risk and struggling students. The mentoring program includes connections with the state's Communities in Schools as well as local agencies and service organizations.

The College and Career Academy serves approximately 800 students by providing pathways for high school completion and postsecondary study or entry directly into the workforce. The system has also established an alternative education program with high support for students who have been removed from the traditional schools for disciplinary, attendance, or other reasons. All high schools have begun a 9th grade academy to address the transition issues and barriers often associated with this age group.

School schedules indicate a variety of pathways and instructional levels to meet individual student needs. Interviews with students and parents also revealed numerous extracurricular and co-curricular activities are offered to promote student engagement. Daily class schedules protect instructional time for teachers and students. Administrators, teachers, and support personnel monitor instructional time to ensure an environment conducive to learning.

Instructional technology is steadily being installed throughout the district as funding becomes available. Technology is generally available; however, use of technology was observed to be limited largely to teacher-centered instruction. Schools and teachers report that instructional resources and media services are readily available and there is strong support from the district to provide appropriate materials.

Schools adhere to curriculum and pacing guides which ensures alignment and articulation throughout the district. The system supports efforts and direction in both horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment and collaboration. Changes in curriculum are implemented only after appropriate study and input from those stakeholders who are affected by such changes.

The system utilizes several assessment benchmark programs to measure student progress in elementary and middle grades. Results from these assessments are used to revise instruction for students. Although the system regularly reviews assessment data, the use of data analysis is inconsistent across the system at the teacher level. Uniformity in data analysis is a key component to effective use of resources and making instructional decisions to systemic and sustainable improvement.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The system maintains expectations for student engagement in all classrooms.
- The climate throughout the system supports a positive learning environment for every student.
- The system has established a variety of intervention strategies and programs to support student achievement including alternative routes to the high school diploma.
- Common benchmark assessments are used to monitor student progress.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Review and revise the technology plan as necessary to ensure equitable and ongoing implementation of instructional technology throughout the system.
- Enhance student-centered technology use in order to provide 21st century experiences and skill sets for all students.
- Employ a uniform use of data analysis district-wide to more effectively guide instructional decisions at the classroom level.  
The system should research ways to more effectively disaggregate and analyze data at the teacher level as a strategy to improve the instructional program.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Floyd County School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Teaching & Learning" standard.

## Standard 4. Documenting & Using Results

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

**Description:**

Floyd County Schools are focused on the mastery skills guided by the Georgia Performance Standards using math benchmarks, universal screeners, and state assessments for directing school improvement plans. The Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team noted district policies and procedures to guide test administration, grading practices, goals and objectives for instructional programs, and attendance procedures. The Team was provided evidence and artifacts of math benchmark assessments for this year.

Floyd County Schools provided evidence of agendas used to direct district conversations on the strengths and weakness of student performance. There is evidence that the district reviews summative assessments

by using an extraction tool provided by Northwest Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency. This data provides information that is longitudinal and latitudinal and drills down to the classroom level.

Vertical Team Meetings and Content Area Meetings are utilized on the local and district level to share data. Schools are using Response to Intervention (RTI) tiers to target strategies for student support. It was noted by the QAR team that teachers felt more time was needed for them to work collaboratively on data analysis to improve their processes in the classroom; data reaches them but more effective uses of the data could be developed. The Team found several professional development initiatives at individual schools but, given the teachers' need for collaborative time, determined that a process to assess alignment of initiatives and programs with the district vision might be needed to focus efforts more deeply and uniformly.

The district supplies the following reports to the State Department of Education every year: Georgia Test Identifier (GTID), Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), Student Record, Pre-identification Test Labels for test forms on Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT), End of Course Tests (EOC), and Student Course Profile data. A variety of methods are employed to communicate student performance such as websites, newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, and the i-Parent website. During the district administrative interviews, there was evidence that the district utilizes content area and vertical team meetings to inform school level performance. The district provides a calendar for early release times for parent conferences. The data on the number of parent conferences at each school was provided.

The district requires universal screening in certain content areas to evaluate the needs of individual students. This assessment is administered three times a year in grades K-5. The district uses multiple data sources from the Georgia Department of Education and the Office of Student Achievement to identify trends within grade levels and subgroups. Summative cohort data is being analyzed down to the classroom level.

Floyd County has been selected to be one of eight systems in Georgia to participate in the Bill and Melinda Gates Post-Secondary Data Project. This project will allow the district to identify strengths and weaknesses in all of their core content areas through the extended use of their data.

Floyd County Schools is involved in a three-year professional learning initiative, Assessment for Learning, for the purpose of involving students in the evaluation of their learning. The district utilizes data from the CRCT, Georgia High School Graduation Test, Dynamic Indicator of Basic Literacy Skills, and AimsWeb benchmarks to provide data on student performance. This is the first year the system has administered a district created math benchmark assessment to determine student progress on grade level math standards in grades 1-8.

A back-up procedure is utilized for securing student records. Copies of all records are maintained and secured at a site away from the Central Office. The Floyd County Board of Education policies are in compliance with state and federal regulations. Procedures for receiving newly enrolled students and special educations records are defined by procedures approved by the administrative procedures.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Student achievement data is collected, analyzed, and disseminated by the district office to the local schools for use by the local school.
- The system has established policies and procedures for guiding test administration, grading practices, goals and objectives for instructional programs, and attendance procedures.

- The system utilizes effective communication systems to communicate student academic performance to parents, students, and community partnerships.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Create collaboration time at all schools for data disaggregation and analysis to support student performance.
- Develop a system to bring student performance data analysis to all teachers.
- Consider a process to assess alignment of initiatives and programs with the district vision to focus professional development efforts more deeply and uniformly.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Floyd County School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Documenting & Using Results" standard.

## Standard 5. Resource & Support Systems

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

**Description:**

Floyd County School District employs a strategic plan to address Charter system requirements and provide success in meeting the needs of its students. The district has demonstrated a commitment to providing the highest qualified and most experienced faculty and staff possible. The Strategic Plan Goal #2, "Providing a Highly Qualified Staff," provides direction for recruitment and retaining highly qualified personnel. According to available statistics, 100% of teachers and paraprofessional staff are Highly Qualified and the teacher retention rate is 93%. College Career Job Fairs, Teach Georgia, and the system website advertise vacancies in the school system. The system offers "to be placed" contracts to exemplary student teachers.

The district ensures that the schools and central office have sufficient staff to fulfill the vision and mission of the district. A review of the organizational effectiveness of the central office was conducted by an independent contractor. The resulting recommendations provide an effective tool for talking points for central office staff restructuring which is under way.

Teacher orientation, teacher handbooks, and mentoring support new teachers during the first year of employment. The QAR team noted that the district supports all personnel by providing professional learning opportunities and equipment. Computer labs, distance learning labs, and 270 Smart Board support schools in fulfilling Goal #6 of the Strategic Plan, "Integrating Technology to Enhance Student Learning." The training and staff development in technology and standards based instruction, provided by Dr. Beth Reynolds to faculty and staff, was visible throughout the district and a constant source of discussion with the QAR team. Though the district provides technology and equipment to further the system's goals, it was noted that the district must continually strive to be on the "cutting edge" of technology in order to serve the "21st century digital learner in a global economy." Interviews with school personnel teachers indicated more professional development is needed to develop strategies to meet this need. Also noted during school visits was the uneven distribution of technology between and among classrooms and schools.

Support service personnel such as, transportation, maintenance, child nutrition, nurses, paraprofessionals and social workers receive learning opportunities and training throughout the school year specific to their assignment. Partnerships with the Health Department and Police Department provide the needed nurses and school resource officers for schools. School social workers and counselors provide an invaluable service by identifying students with special needs and working with parents and other agencies to support students.

The QAR team visited at what students referred to as the “A School” (the Alternative School) that the system refers to as the Floyd County Education Center. Students who have been expelled, have continual discipline, attendance, or other problems are sent to “the Center” after due process and are provided with a focused curriculum toward graduation. The school maintains a very strong faculty who voiced their love and support of these students. They maintain a one hundred per cent graduation rate at the school. A large group of parents and students attended the QAR team interview, at their own invitation, and told stories about how the Center “gave me another chance,” “loved on me until I graduated,” and “steered me in the right direction.” Parents voiced their opinions: “It was the best thing that ever happened to (our child).” The building housing the Center is old, very little technology is present although what was there was used extensively, and it was found that there was no transportation provided by the district to the school. Since these students come from every point in the district, transportation is a challenge. Central Office personnel were found to be aware of the issues pertaining to the Center indicating that a plan was underway to address all the needs of the students and faculty there.

Although the state as a whole is experiencing an economic downturn, Floyd County has maintained financial stability. As stated in the district profile, the system has lost \$33 million in revenue since 2003. The school system has endured this loss of revenue without a RIF (Reduction In Force) or cancellation of academic programs. All personnel have sacrificed through furloughs.

Short and long range planning and local audits allow the district to maintain accurate records and help safeguard its financial resources. Floyd County undergoes a annual audits by the Georgia Department of Audits, a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) audit, E-Rate audits and periodic monitoring of federally funded programs. For the past three years Floyd County has had an “unqualified” audit, the “best opinion given by the state” finding by the state of Georgia.

The Budget Steering Committee works annually in studying and analyzing the financial situation. The goal of this committee is to facilitate Goal #4 of the Strategic Plan, “Providing Adequate Resources,” to support all areas of operations. There is a five-year facilities plan and a SPLOST plan to prioritize needs. These plans address strategies and time lines to maintain current facilities and build additional facilities. Some of these strategies address procedural plans, physical needs, energy conservation and facilitation of new construction.

The district became the first Kindergarten through 12th grade school in the nation to become certified as Cleaning Industry Management Standard – Green Building. This “Green Building” standard focuses on training of custodial staff, service delivery, health, safety, and environmental stewardship.

The Strategic Plan addresses the needs and methods of support for all students. Special Education, Alternative, At-Risk, Transient, and Gifted programs are available. Supportive plans also address the areas of health, counseling, nutrition, safety, curriculum, transportation, and special learning needs. The system provides nurses, counselors, interventionists, special education teachers and aides, social workers, and a school psychologist to support these areas. The College and Career Center is an example of the commitment the system has to meeting the needs of students. The center is designed to provide students with “real world” experiences that will lead to post secondary study and jobs. During interviews with

support system personnel it was noted that there are strong collaborative efforts to make plans to meet student's individual learning needs.

Parents were very complimentary of the superintendent's leadership and vision and the staff's care for their children. There are many opportunities for parents and business stakeholders to serve on committees and advisory councils. Parents feel that their children are in safe and orderly environment. The students indicated that they felt safe in school and know where to go to find help if needed. Parents indicated that the district website, i-Parent, and the "Alert Now" programs are very effective communication tools. i-Parent provides parents with a means of viewing their child's grades, homework, and attendance. The Alert Now is message system that is used to notify parents of emergency situations. The district website provides detailed information concerning the district's Strategic Plan.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The Superintendent and Board of Education provide strong and courageous leadership as the school system has encountered a major loss of revenue and has responded to this loss with no RIF (Reduction in Force) or cancellation of academic programs.
- The College and Career Center provides students with "real world" experiences and training that will lead to post-secondary college and career opportunities.
- The district became the first Kindergarten through 12th grade school in the nation to become certified as Cleaning Industry Management Standard – Green Building, indicating its commitment to the local and world community. This "Green Building" standard focuses on training of custodial staff, service delivery, health, safety, and environmental stewardship.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Provide on-going professional learning opportunities in technology to faculty and staff to support the integration of up-to-date technology in classrooms.
- Review the transportation system county wide and consider creative school scheduling solutions that will provide equity for students regardless of the school site.
- Review staff assignments as the system capitalizes on the benefits of charter status and align these with the Strategic Plan and focus personnel resources and energies toward the vision of the district.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Floyd County School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Resource & Support Systems" standard.

## **Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications & Relationships**

**Standard:** The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

**Description:**

A strong commitment to the community and stakeholders was in evidence through artifacts and observations throughout the district. The desire to inform stakeholders about the many positive things that are happening in the school system is exemplified by the wide range of communication and relationship building methods that are used to share information. The system fostered passage of a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) referendum in 2009 which brought about significant improvements in school facilities through new construction and renovation projects at three middle schools and two high

schools. The SPLOST initiative generated support of district initiatives and for students in general. The names of twenty seven business partners in one school and eighteen in another were prominently placed on the wall in two schools.

The district further engages in what personnel described as “empathetic listening” which promotes effective communication leading to “intentional listening,” building the strong relationships noted in numerous personal testimonials and demonstration of support by numerous stakeholders. Examples of strategies used throughout the system to listen and communicate with stake holders include: the Alert Now System, “Ask The Superintendent” (an online question and answer forum), an online payment system for school nutrition accounts, Face book, and Twitter accounts which can be accessed via the system web-site.

The district further demonstrates the utilization of the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to further the work of the school system through:

- Various committees representing a wide variety of stakeholder groups from the community comprised of parents, teachers, and community and business leaders as well as students;
- Parents, community and business leaders serve on the Superintendent’s Advisory Committee;
- Teachers serve on a Teachers Advisory Committee; and
- Students serve on a Students Advisory Committee.

The various committees meet at regularly scheduled times to provide input to the Superintendent, Central Office and school level personnel. Sign in sheets and agendas of the meetings provided support for this finding.

It is evident that a priority of the school district is to communicate the goals for improvement and student learning needs to all stakeholders. A driving force is the Strategic Plan which is accessible to all stakeholders on the system’s website. Learning expectations for students are found on the web site by grade level in the “Parent Center.” Schools regularly communicate learning expectations through newsletters distributed by the classroom teachers, school administrators, and school organizations.

The QAR team noted a stakeholder group that was at odds with the district concerning a community school closure in the mid 1980s. Discussion with other stakeholders indicated that there may be other issues that undermine stakeholder support for the district that are holdovers from the past, exist because of lack of understanding of district issues, or for other reasons yet to be noted or understood by the district.

Channels of communication are open between the parents and the schools. Teachers regularly communicate with parents regarding student learning and progress by phone, email, and texting. Parents are able to check “i- Parent,” an online grade portal, for updates and student progress. This access was on display to the QAR team and supported by the testimony of parents. Students also support this finding. They say, "We can't get away from it!." Teachers and parents are constantly communicating about student progress. The system and schools also provide brochures, flyers, and other printed material to parents and community that were on display for the team. Some parents indicated that they were fully aware of the various means to communicate with them but chose not to employ these means, stating that they trusted the system to take care of their children and their learning. The same parents, however, were not as knowledgeable of school and district events, nor did they seem to understand the assessment and performance reports as well as others in the groups interviewed.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The district enjoys strong support and a high level of engagement by stakeholders.

- A strong and consistent system of communication with stakeholders is intentionally employed by the district.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Develop a means to engage supportive parents who choose not to utilize the information and reporting initiatives of the schools and district so that they can more effectively support their children in learning.
- Assess the level of lingering resentment by some stakeholders over issues of the past, determine the root of the issues, and address these to attempt to gain these stakeholders' support.

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional," indicating that the Floyd County School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Stakeholder Communications & Relationships" standard.

## Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

**Description:**

The vision of the Floyd County Schools Charter System is to prepare students to continue their education beyond high school in order to be successful in their chosen career endeavors, and to extend the mission: "a quality education for quality life." The system maintains a continuously developed profile of the district, stakeholders, and students which is used to guide decisions for student learning. Floyd County is building a service oriented school system centered on core beliefs and reflective of the district profile. The core beliefs state the school system will meet the ever changing educational needs of their community, state, and the nation through:

- Strong relationships with stakeholders;
- Treating each person with dignity and respect;
- Providing a safe learning environment;
- To learn through hands on experience and active exploration;
- Recognition for achievement; and
- Professional learning centered on students' academic success.

These beliefs are deeply embedded in all aspects of the system, have driven the development and execution of the Strategic Plan, and ensure the continued growth and progress in student and district performance. The Superintendent, the visionary of the school district, stated, "We are never as good as we think we are. We can get better." Decisions in the district are based on the question of, "How does this affect student learning?" underscoring the commitment to maximizing student performance and success in the future. The schools work in constant collaboration with the district to maximize efficiency and economy across the system.

Discussions with members of the Floyd County educational "family" revealed that they like the flexibility to be able shape education. This flexibility comes as a result of the Charter status and the developing realizations of the implications for teaching and learning. The Superintendent stated, "We need to throw

out the box,” indicating the level of system-wide creative thinking that is expected and is yet developing. There are some frustrations when they actually “get out of the box.” Teachers are sometimes challenged by pockets of sparse technology, inadequate repair and maintenance of equipment, and a lack of training to maximize physical resources such as technology, some physical plant issues, and the ever present fiscal resource challenge. The system responds to requests to address most of these challenges quickly and effectively.

“Schools are a hub of the community,” the Superintendent stated. The QAR team observed that the passion for the district appears to be high, the dedication to district causes steady improvement, and loyalty to the good of the children has been passed on from generation to generation. Care is taken to “listen intentionally” to stakeholders concerning their expectations and disappointments with the system so that the passion, dedication, and loyalty are matched with system performance. Through programs like Family Reading Night, Renaissance Celebration, Book Give-Away, and Chick-Fil-A Family Night, the system builds stronger relationships between parents and their schools, while also keeping them involved in the academic lives of their children. Parents report that teachers are readily available to discuss student progress. They utilize email, cell phones, and texting as well as the other more conventional means of school to home communication. It was reported to the team that one school has an event on average of four times a month for parents to participate in academic exercises with their children.

The College and Career Academy, the innovative program that propelled the system to the Charter status, has enrolled eight hundred students who can earn Dual Credits for college, develop career skills and knowledge, and explore possibilities for their futures, underscoring the commitment to “a quality education for quality life.” Strong relationships with higher education (community college, colleges, vocational/trade schools) and the business community, help provide curriculum that is engaging and helps deliver real world experience. The Superintendent stated that she is “proudest of the commitment to education from the community.”

The curricular offerings of the district are created in a culture of collaboration, understanding, transparency, trust, and the ability to accumulate important data to meet the needs of their students. Contributions and input from local business owners, parents, school counsels, partnerships between parents and teachers, and the community passion for the district have built a strong foundation for continued improvement. Other creative programs and initiatives to meet the widely varied needs of students, parents, and community include:

- Freshman Academies in which freshman work exclusively together in designated sections of the school. The program helps build confidence, allows teachers to monitor progress more closely, and helps ensure that these students start high school prepared.
- Intervention Coordinators for Science are being prepared to ensure students are put in the best position for success.
- Early intervention programs offer one on one attention and small class sizes so that challenged students will be successful.
- Intersessions, which are creatively scheduled opportunities in which the County offers struggling students the ability to catch up in smaller group settings and with more direct one on one attention for students. Data from this program indicate an increase in graduation rate from 67% to 81%, even though the reduced lunch rate is rising.
- The district provides many resources for parents to know what exactly is occurring within the district, such as the Alert Now Message system, “Ask the Superintendent” website, and use of Facebook and Twitter.
- The district has developed an evaluation system whereby supervisors visit classrooms and make “snapshot observations.” The superintendent stated that this is a key tool “to ensure lessons are

impactful, students are engaged, and there is continued progress.”

- Progress is measured through data and reports maintained and reviewed monthly at the school level using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Skills (DIBELS), Grade List Reports, and AIMSweb, a benchmark and progress monitoring system to chart math progress. Based on these results, educators can make adjustments to teaching to maximize student learning.

The district has worked hard to maintain strong Instructional Services that reflect community expectations and the districts’ strong beliefs in what students should learn that include:

- Pre-K,
- Distance Learning,
- Title I Programs,
- Special Education,
- Music,
- Art, and
- Physical Education.

The QAR team noted the intent to keep programs in place that have been cut by other districts when met with similar fiscal challenges.

The Standards Based Curriculum is evident throughout the system. School improvement plans are aligned with the district strategic plan. “We are all headed in the same direction,” the superintendent stated. Teachers develop Professional Learning Plans, which are implemented during the five early dismissal days provided for this purpose. They share these plans with parents to support student learning at home.

The use of technology is a significant emphasis of the Floyd County District although there is much room for growth. It currently is not being used extensively for mining data to monitor progress from interventions. The lack of technology in some schools such as the Education Center undermines improvement and academic achievement. A lack maintenance and of follow up service was discovered at some school sites. The QAR team heard some stories of it taking six months for repairs to be completed. Ongoing training for the effective use of technology was identified as a concern by some teachers. One teacher stated, “The Promethean Board could do a million things, but I feel like I only know how to do 100.” Teachers who had technology in their classrooms were generally found to be using it effectively. In some elementary classrooms, students were utilizing technology interactively, which underscores the lack of consistency across the district.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The district makes decisions based on their unique expectations for student performance and their strong beliefs in what students should know and how they should learn, reflecting the core values and emphasis on “a quality education for quality life.”
- Despite the economic challenges the district maintains music and art programs, highlighting their commitment to their core beliefs and what is good for their students.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement in this standard area:**

- Develop the technology plan further to address current issues of equity, maintenance and upkeep, and professional development in technology.
- Intensify the uses of technology to provide more data on the success and improvement of intervention programs .

**Finding:** Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review Team has assigned the overall assessment level of "Operational," indicating that the Floyd County School System has met the accreditation requirements for the "Commitment to Continuous Improvement" standard.

## Quality Assurance Findings

The Quality Assurance Review Team examined the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance. The team reviewed the district's practices and methods to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results. The team provides the following findings in this area.

### Description

Interviews and observations revealed that student achievement data is collected, analyzed, and disseminated by the district office to local schools. All educators have access to data to inform decision-making at the classroom level although the manner in which this data arrived varied from school to school. One principal stated that if teachers did not analyze the data themselves, they did not “own it,” indicating that they would not use it as effectively. Teachers in other schools indicated that it was the analysis of the data, supported by raw data as necessary, that was most effective in informing instruction.

The system has developed effective communication systems to inform parents, students, and community partners of student academic performance. All stakeholders interviewed agreed that the many avenues of communication to and from the schools and central office were complementary and largely successful. Some parents indicated that they preferred to deal only with certain levels of information and would ignore other avenues, such as test scores and school performance reporting. Evidence provided of communication efforts were school/district to home communication, surveys and questionnaires, newsletters, emails, newspaper clippings, posters, and bulletins. The district works hard take its messages to the public.

The District has strong support among all stakeholders as evidenced by interviews and the strong testimony given by stakeholders. All students, parents, and community leaders interviewed described the operation of the school district and how they felt it strongly met the needs of the students and community. Some stakeholders indicated they felt the district could work harder on some issues but were supportive overall.

The Superintendent and Board of Education have responded to significant loss of revenue without loss from Reduction In Force and no cancellations in academic programs. The QAR team noted artifacts that detailed the steady decline in funding and the district's responding efforts to reduce operating costs. A major emphasis during these years of declining revenue has been to maintain the quality of student services, understanding that personnel provide those services and must be maintained. The district was able to streamline, combine, and focus personnel and programs while maintaining the level of student support. The Strategic Plan and the vision and mission are constantly used as guiding principles to identify needs and set goals for the districts.

The College and Career Academy was established because of the need to provide avenues to success outside the normal high school setting. The setting provides for career explorations and options other than the college track and is a realization of the vision and mission of the district that has provided access to quality living and a contribution to the community through its graduates.

The focus on technology acquisition and implementation has been rapid, largely successful, and supports high levels of student engagement and interaction. While levels of implementation and training are uneven across the system, the high levels of use and teachers' intent to further employ technology strategies are apparent.

Floyd County demonstrates its commitment to the world community by being the first school system in the nation to earn “Green Building Certification.” The certification indicates the district's commitment to the community to deliver quality cleaning services across the district using only environmentally friendly products and conservation

techniques through trained physical plant employees.

Employees across the system voiced their support of and commitment to the school district, expressing satisfaction that their voices are heard, their work valued, and that their contributions to the larger efforts of the district mattered. Interviews with supervisors provided insights into how they utilize “intentional listening” and quick responses to needs in order to “keep the customer satisfied,” as one supervisor stated it.

Floyd County is continually engaged in monitoring student progress and academic achievement through quality uses of data that were observed on school visits and interviews with stakeholders. Data to guide decision making and instruction was readily available throughout the district although the levels of analysis and subsequent utilization to inform teaching and learning varied from school to school.

Observations of teaching and learning in the classrooms revealed a high level of implementation of Georgia’s Standards Based Classroom organization. This organization was noted to be highly effective in keeping students on task, maximizing teaching time by reducing transition time requirements, and reductions in distractions for students. Seemingly a natural extension of the Standards Based Curriculum, it provided for high levels of organization and seamless segueing of activities.

### **Strengths**

- Strong adherence to the vision and mission provides a consistent vehicle for continued growth and improvement as well as for the innovative thinking that has brought about substantive additions to the curricular programs.
- The high standard of teaching and learning, the College and Career Academy, the Green Building Certification, and the efforts to maintain the level of student services and keep people employed demonstrate the level of the district’s commitment to the welfare of the community they serve.

### **Opportunities**

- Develop the data management system further to promote consistency of analysis and delivery to the classroom level to inform teaching and learning.
- Review and revise the technology plan to ensure equitable and ongoing implementation of instructional technology throughout the system.
- Complete the process of central office reorganization and realignment with the vision and mission to streamline the system, cut costs, increase efficiency, and more effectively support school level operations.

## Schools Visited

The Quality Assurance Review team visited the following schools during the visit to the Floyd County School System on 03/06/2011 - 03/09/2011.

|                               |                               |             |         |            |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---------|------------|
| Pepperell Primary School      | 1 Dragon Drive, SE            | Lindale     | Georgia | 30147      |
| Coosa Middle School           | 212 Eagle Drive               | Rome        | Georgia | 30165      |
| Johnson Elementary School     | 1839 Morrison Campground Road | Rome        | Georgia | 30161-9125 |
| Model High School             | 3252 Calhoun Highway          | Rome        | Georgia | 30161      |
| Cave Spring Elementary School | 13 Rome Street                | Cave Spring | Georgia | 30124      |
| Pepperell Elementary School   | 270 Hughes Dairy Road         | Lindale     | Georgia | 30147      |

## Conclusion

The commendations and required actions in this report are designed to focus the school district on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student performance and system effectiveness. While powerful in potential, the commendations and required actions only have meaning when acted upon by the school district and its schools. The strength of this report lies in the school district's commitment to using the findings to continuously improve. The key is action. The school district is encouraged to use the report as a call to action, a tool to sustain momentum in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The team identified required actions for improvement that the school district will need to address. Following this review, the school district will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the district leadership, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for hosting the review team. The team wishes the district and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS-CASI-GA accreditation with AdvancED.

# Appendix

## Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Dr. Drew Moore, CHAIR
- Mr. Ken Clouse, VICE\_CHAIR (Cartersville City School System)
- Mr. Solomon Ferguson, MEMBER (Meriwether County School System)
- Ms. Therese Reddekopp, MEMBER (Coweta County Schools)
- Mr. Charles Shumake, MEMBER (Gainesville City Schools)
- Mr. Don Oswald, MEMBER (Alabama Independent Schools Assoc.)
- Mr. Kirk Hartom, MEMBER (The ASK Academy)
- Mr. Edward Garcia, MEMBER (The Ask Academy Charter School)

## AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems

The AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. As school districts reach higher levels of implementation of the standards, they will have a greater capacity to support ever-increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. Each of the seven standards listed below has corresponding indicators and impact statements which can be accessed at [www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org).

### **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.

### **Governance and Leadership**

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

### **Teaching and Learning**

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

### **Documenting and Using Results**

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

### **Resource and Support Systems**

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

### **Stakeholder Communications and Relationships**

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

**Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

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