



Accreditation Report

Rockdale County Schools

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school system stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school system, and the kinds of programs and services that a school system implements to support student learning.

 The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school system with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the community will have a more complete picture of how the school system perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school system to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

Description of the School System

Describe the school system's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school system serves?

Rockdale County is located approximately 25 miles east of Atlanta on Interstate 20 and within the Metropolitan Atlanta Region. Despite being the second smallest county in Georgia geographically, Rockdale County ranks 10th in population density and 28th in overall population, including approximately 13,941 residents within the Conyers city limit (2010 US Census.) The 2011 US Census estimates Rockdale County's total population at 85,765. The median household income in Rockdale was \$55,779 in 2010, up 4.07% since 2000. The income growth rate is more than 50% lower than the state average rate of 9.42% and is substantially lower than the national average rate of 19.17%. Categorized by the National Center of Educational Statistics as being on the "urban fringe of a large city," Rockdale is uniquely comprised of 34% suburban, 35% rural and 16% urban class/land structures and is equally represented by both White and African American residents, including significant identification with Hispanic, Asian and East Indian cultures. This is not reflective of our student population. As a result of the county's slow economic growth, we have experienced a significant number of home foreclosures and a rapid and steep decline in the tax digest.

RCPS is the largest employer in the county with a total of 2,176 employees (including 1,253 certified), followed by the Rockdale Medical Center and Walmart. While there exists a handful of industries in Rockdale (among them are Acuity Lighting, Pratt Industries, Hill-Phoenix, Golden State Foods, AT&T) it remains largely a community of commuters. In fact, less than 40% of the labor force works in Rockdale County.

RCPS certified staff, 99.8% are "Highly Qualified" and include the following:

- 1% Hispanic
- <1% American Indian
- 1% Asian
- 41% Black
- 57% White
- <1% More than one race
- 22% Male
- 78% Female

Rockdale County Public Schools (RCPS) has 16,200 children enrolled in 22 schools and programs for the 2013-14 school year. RCPS is comprised of 11 Elementary Schools, 4 Middle Schools, 3 High Schools and a variety of Specialty Schools and Programs. New programs in the past three years are the Memorial STEM Academy for Environmental Studies, Honey Creek Elementary STEM Program, AVID at Sims Elementary, Microsoft IT Academies at each high school, C.J. Hicks Elementary International Baccalaureate candidate school and the Rockdale Institute for Advanced Technology.

All of the eighteen "traditional" schools are Title I eligible. The free and reduced meal rate in RCPS is currently 69% with some schools as high as 90%, up from 63% in 2009.

The racial composition of RCPS students is:

- 61.63% African American (up from 57% in 2009)
- ~~-20.25% White (down from 28% in 2009)~~

- 1.90% Asian (up from 1.85% in 2009)
- 12.60% Hispanic (up from 9% in 2009)
- 3.44% classified as other or multi-racial (up from 2.8% in 2009)

Since the passing of the No Child Left Behind initiatives, system scores have been on the rise. The 2011 graduation rate was 86% and RCPS met the state and federal requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the sixth consecutive year in 2011-2012. Furthermore, 100% of the schools within the district achieved AYP. The following year, the state accountability transitioned from AYP to the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI).

Graduation Rate: 1,058 RCPS students graduated in 2011, 1,065 in 2012 and 1,108 in 2013.

2009-10: (Lever) 84%

2010-11: (Lever/Cohort) 86%/66.2%

2011-12: (Cohort) 73.3%

2012-13: (Cohort) 78%

(For clarification, the State of Georgia now uses a cohort graduation rate that includes the percentage of students who graduate within four years. Until 2012, the state calculated graduation rates based on the percentage of students who graduated within seven years (Lever). While we support the state's cohort graduation rate calculations, RCPS is committed to ensuring that ALL students graduate within the timeframe established by their customized education path.)

Administration: During the last three years, Rockdale County Public Schools has experienced changes in key leadership roles. However, the system boasts a low turnover rate among all employees. In June of 2012, the superintendent of seven years resigned to move out of state. The Board named Mr. Billy Johnson interim superintendent while they conducted a superintendent search. The Board of Education appointed Chief Academic Officer Richard Autry, superintendent as of July 1, 2012. That change led to a new chief academic officer and director of curriculum and instruction. The director of professional learning, director of business services, the director of learning support, and six of twenty-two (27%) principals also changed within the last three years.

The 2012 election resulted in three new Board of Education members who began their first term in January 2013, along with a new chair and vice-chair.

Additionally, since 2010, with the receipt of a state Race to the Top award, Georgia and Rockdale County have built momentum for innovation and reform in the four core educational assurance areas of (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, and (4) turning around lowest-achieving schools.

System's Purpose

Provide the school system's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school system embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

Strategic Plan

The current trajectory of RCPS is the result of the evolution of the community's vision for public education, as expressed in our recently renewed strategic plan. The RCPS Strategic Plan is the guiding document for prioritizing our operational goals, as well as the allocation of resources. All stakeholders in our community, from students and teachers to parents and business owners, were meaningfully engaged in the development of the original strategic plan and in the recent five-year renewal of the plan, and identified a need to optimize college and career readiness, teacher and leader effectiveness, real-time and longitudinal data systems, and personalized learning. Consequently, as the community's vision evolved, the planning team's robust research, assessment and feedback led to the creations of the current plan, which includes the Mission, Vision, Beliefs and Objectives below.

Mission, Vision and Beliefs

The mission of Rockdale County Public Schools is to create a boundless learning community where students aspire to their dreams and success is expected of all, is to ensure that each student performs at his/her highest academic level and is a successful, participatory member of our global society, through a system distinguished by:

- fearless advocates for students;
- community alliance for students' success;
- empowering students to shape their own future;
- infinite learning opportunities for all; and
- customized measures of individual student success.

Community Beliefs

We believe that

- Family is the most important factor in the development of the individual
- A safe and orderly environment is essential to teaching and learning
- Education is the most important asset in maximizing the opportunities of an individual and a community
- Every person deserves a voice and is worthy of respect
- All human beings have the capacity to learn
- Every person deserves the opportunity to succeed
- Each person is responsible for his or her own actions
- Faith gives meaning and purpose to life
- Students are at the core of all educational decision-making
- Diversity strengthens our community

Objectives

- All students will pass local, state and national assessments at levels which exceed established standards.
- All students identify their dreams and are limitless in their individual pursuits.
- 100% of our students graduate and succeed in their endeavors in higher education, the workforce, and/or the global community.
- 100% of our students are responsible citizens, serve the community, and demonstrate highest ethical standards.

The vision for the future of education in Rockdale County Public Schools focuses on expanded learning options for students and families, specialized programs of study based on interests and talents, and new ways of learning through virtual opportunities. RCPS will expand its charter, magnet and advanced programs of study for elementary, middle and high school students across the district. Instructional technology usage by students and teachers will be dramatically magnified through one to one access to tablets, laptops, and/or smart phones. Customization of the learning process will be defined by personalized learning plans for each student, individual portfolios blueprinting the path to attaining college and career goals, and a reinvention of the advisement process to empower students and their parents with the ability to define educational success. The philosophy of RCPS is that the mission, vision, and beliefs apply to all students and is often referred to as ALL MEANS ALL.

Rockdale County Public Schools is proud of its strengths and accomplishments. The greatest strength within the district is related to a purposeful transformation that has focused on increased student achievement for all students. The district has been a leader in transitioning to a standards-based instructional model. Upon implementation of Georgia Performance Standards, Rockdale County Public Schools partnered with the Georgia Department of Education to ensure the successful adoption of standards. Instructional personnel have received extensive training to provide the knowledge and support for implementing the model. Teachers analyze and unpack standards for thorough understanding of expectations and develop curriculum maps to ensure all skills are taught to mastery. Assessment of learning and assessment for learning have become integral to the planning process. Teachers also learn to effectively disaggregate data and use results from multiple data sources to drive instruction within the framework of the RCPS Cycle for Results. The development and scoring of common assessments have provided a uniform level of acceptability for student work. The integration of Common Core Georgia Performance Standards will follow similar tactics.

RCPS continues to pilot the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) to improve and assess teacher effectiveness by

- Optimizing student learning and growth,
- Improving the quality of instruction through accountability for classroom performance,
- Providing a basis for instructional improvement through performance appraisal and professional growth, and
- Implementing a performance evaluation system that promotes collaboration between the teacher and evaluator.

RCPS has developed a framework for K-12 specialty and Choice options. For the first time ever, RCPS implemented four new Choice options for the 2013-14 school year. Thus far, three elementary and one middle school offer Choice specialty programs, with plans to roll out additional Choice options over the next 3-5 years. In addition, Rockdale Virtual Campus expanded its offerings to enable a high school student to fulfill all graduation requirements through online courses, and welcomed its first full-time students last spring.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school system's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school system is striving to achieve in the next three years.

The greatest strength within the district is related to a purposeful transformation that has focused on increased student achievement for all students. The district has been a leader in transitioning to a standards-based instructional model.

In five (5) subjects (Reading, ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies) grades 3-8, RCPS students exceeded the state in 30 out of 30 achievement areas on the 2012-13 CRCT.

EOCT showed high levels of achievement in 9th Grade in American Literature, and significant improvements in Physical Science, US History, and Economics.

Georgia College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) is the new accountability system that replaces the No Child Left Behind, and measures schools and school districts on a 100-point scale.

The State vs. RCPS average scores:

	State	RCPS
Elementary	83.4	85.7
Middle	81.4	87
High	72.6	67.6

While we are pleased to see that our elementary and middle school scores are above the state average, our scores indicate that we must continue to focus on improvements at the high school level, particularly in mathematics while further developing our elementary and middle school programs.

RCPS has responded to the challenges in secondary level math by implementing improvements in the restructuring of the 1) high school master schedule to provide 9th and 10th grade students math instruction every day, and 2) 9th grade Coordinate Algebra and 10th grade Analytic Geometry curriculum and instructional sequence, and 3) professional development and model classrooms.

RCPS has also significantly increased the number of students taking Advanced Placement courses and exams.

Safety-net programs are in place at each school and are aligned with state and national standards for students not meeting standards.

High Quality Personnel: Leadership and Classroom

The Office of Professional Learning has brokered a district-wide partnership to provide high-quality, job-embedded professional learning for all teachers and support staff members. This partnership between Curriculum, Learning Support and Professional Learning is multi-faceted and dynamic and provides daily support for our faculty.

RCPS has prioritized its efforts to fully embrace the Georgia Performance Standards and the supporting tenets of Standards-based Education; thus, we have implemented a content coaching model and now employ district-based coaches. The Cycle for Results is the focal point.

Leadership Support and Development

New Vision Leadership Development is a plan that aims to identify and develop a pool of leaders who will be equipped to carry on the RCPS SY 2013-2014

legacy of excellence. The model includes components for principals such as Peer Mentors, Leader Coaches, a Beginning Principal Academy; as well as a track designed for assistant principals that includes a Principal Pipeline, a Principal Institute, mentoring, and shadowing opportunities. Finally, the Aspiring Leaders program identifies and develops potential leaders within our district who will be equipped to serve as assistant principals, central office leaders, and principals.

Turning Data Into Action

RCPS has made significant modifications to the support structure of the district. The most relevant has been the installation and implementation of a teacher portal that integrates all of the district's support software, and includes a multi-tiered student information system and a variety of specialized modules for real-time, data-driven education. Focus can now be on the analysis of this information, turning data into action.

Since FY 2003, RCPS has experienced austerity reductions in funding provided by the state totaling \$64.2M. In FY 2014, our state revenue was reduced by \$10.2M in austerity reductions (\$10.2M is included in the \$64.2M). As a result, our school calendar has been reduced to 170 instructional days. Never the less, the Office of Financial Services has achieved excellence in financial reporting, auditing procedures and fiscal management, allowing RCPS to continue to be one of the few Georgia school districts operating debt-free. Our community approved a 4th consecutive Education Special Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) in November 2013. The next five years will bring in revenue specifically slated for improvements to facilities, technology and safety/security measures. RCPS employs a full time Grants Writer and has been successful at obtaining other revenue streams through grant funding.

Community and parent support is critical to the processes that drive student achievement. RCPS strongly encourages parent involvement and receives strong community support through mentoring, Parent Academy, Teen Leadership Summit, apprenticeship and internship opportunities, the Academic Booster Club, and the Partners In Education program.

Other Notable Achievements

2013

- RCPS received PACE Award for Clean Air Campaign District of the Year
- RCPS Board of Education previously held a Board of Distinction classification. Under the new classification system, the Board is a Quality Board via the Georgia School Boards Association and Georgia School Superintendents Association and operates as a standards-driven Board.
- RCPS met 100% of compliance indicators required by IDEA

2012

- RCPS designated as an Advanced Placement (AP) Honor District 2011 for increased AP participation and achievement-1 of only 469 districts in North America
- RCPS Achieves Nationwide AP Honor Roll by College Board
- RCPS met 100% of compliance indicators required by IDEA

2011

- RCPS has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the 6th consecutive year with all schools making AYP as well.
- Dr. Sam King was named the 2011 Georgia Superintendent of the Year.
- RCPS has met or exceeded the state targets in all categories for Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives for the performance of Limited English Proficient students.
- RCPS was recognized as a leader in the state for outstanding efforts to improve the performance of students with disabilities.
- RCA Early Learning Center has earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Next three years:

The vision for the future of education in Rockdale County Public Schools focuses on expanded learning options for students and families, specialized programs of study based on interests and talents, and new ways of learning through virtual opportunities. Rockdale County Public Schools has a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that will 1) ensure educational equity; 2) accelerated student achievement by supporting each student's unique learning needs and individual interests and 3) help them achieve their greatest potential through a wide variety of strategies, supports and resources that are appropriate to their interests, abilities and learning styles. RCPS will put student interest and individual learning styles first and create a complete transformation of student's path, curriculum, instruction and schedule. This unique blend of strategies creates a longitudinal approach to cutting edge personalized student learning through exploration of student interests, increased rigor, exposure to student-selected pathways of study, and post-secondary preparation.

Additional Information

Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.

Rockdale County Public Schools offer a perfect blend of resources to create invaluable opportunities for today's students to achieve their dreams. Students are challenged to work harder, reach higher, dream bigger.

Outlined in the strategic plan, RCPS has the vision and blueprint for a world class future. We are creating more opportunities for our students and families as evidenced by our choice options to give parents and students the flexibility to attend schools or programs that specifically meet student interests and/or talents.

It's this kind of vision that holds our schools accountable to the highest standards possible. Charged with educating all students (ALL MEANS ALL) so they make positive contributions to society, apply learning to life, and excel based on individual ability, RCPS provides the necessary academic, cultural, and social opportunities.

Challenging Curriculum

The school system focuses on developing each student to the best of his or her ability. The curriculum is distinguished by rigor for all students at every grade level. RCPS students are consistently recognized as state, regional, and national academic champions. Comprehensive academic programs ensure that all students are challenged with experiences that help them become lifelong learners. Classrooms are equipped with 21st century technology, enabling students to learn using the advanced technology they use in their daily lives. To teach the leaders of tomorrow, the members of our instructional staff must continually update their knowledge and skills. All teachers are encouraged and expected to attend professional learning opportunities in their field of expertise and in pedagogy.

Complementing the Curriculum

A variety of athletic and fine arts offerings bring enjoyment and quality of life to both the students who participate and community members who love to watch live sports, theater, or musical performances. All of our schools have competitive athletic programs, academic teams, drama activities, and music curriculum where participants learn important life skills such as teamwork, confidence, leadership, and strength through diversity. Extracurricular programs promote a healthy lifestyle and involvement to complement the outstanding academic opportunities.

Exceeding Expectations

RCPS has gained state and national recognition for student achievement throughout the district. Accolades include being named AP Honor Schools by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement and Performance Awards from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. In addition, the Rockdale Magnet School for Science and Technology was named the first STEM Certified high school in Georgia. All of the eligible Rockdale County public schools are Title I Distinguished Schools and some have been designated Georgia Schools of Excellence in recent years. Academic teams and clubs throughout the district have won regional, state and national championships, as have many of our athletic teams and clubs. Superior ratings in band, chorus, and drama further illustrate Rockdale's commitment to student success. Test scores are an important indicator of a school system's success in addressing core academics. Each year, students from Rockdale's high schools receive scholarships or appointments to top universities throughout the United States.

Self Assessment

Introduction

AdvancED's Self Assessment (SA) diagnostic is based on the AdvancED Standards of Quality, which serves as the foundation of the accreditation and continuous improvement process. The SA is a valuable tool for collaboratively engaging staff members and stakeholders in purposeful, honest dialogue and reflection to assess the institution's adherence to the Standards, and guide its continuous improvement efforts. The SA includes the institution's self-ratings of and the evidence cited for each of the indicators, comments that explain the indicator's ratings and an overall narrative for each Standard. The results of the SA are reviewed by the External Review Team as one essential component of the preparation process for the institution's External Review.

Purpose and Direction

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

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	The system's process for review, revision, and communication of the purpose statement is documented. The process is formalized and implemented on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement focuses on student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Minutes from meetings related to development of the district's purpose and direction •Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the district's purpose •Parent handbook Public site RCPS Model for Continuous Growth RCPS strategic plan Step-by-step guide for Action Team Members Strategic plan brochure Strategic plan quarterly update to BOE Strategic planning--training PowerPoint Superintendent PowerPoint on strategic plan Vision for the Future of Education 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process for review, revision, and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor and maintain data about each school and provide feedback for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continuous Improvement Coach Job Description RCPS District and Site-Based Alignment Rubric Site-based plan facilitation training and timelines Step-by-step guide for action team members Strategic Plan 2017 Strategic plan monitoring and indicators 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is evident in documentation and decision making. This commitment is regularly reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership and staff share high expectations for professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs •The district strategic plan •Academic Rigor Coordinator Job Description AP score data Board policy-Professional Personnel Ethics CJH school choice Elementary school principals mtg minutes Focus Walk district analysis 2013-14 Focus Walk school report Focus Walk Summary Report 2012-13 HCE STEM Program Pathway to School Choice and Specialty 2013-14 Principal data briefing agendas Professional Learning Institute screenshots RCPS Cycle for Results Framework RCPS Specialty Program Framework SES Avid flyer Memorial Middle STEM program 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	Leaders at all levels of the system implement a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. All stakeholder groups are engaged in the process. Personnel maintain a profile with current and comprehensive data on student, school, and system performance. The profile contains analyses of data used to identify goals for the improvement of conditions that support student learning and that are aligned with the system's purpose. Improvement goals have measurable performance targets. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Leaders hold all personnel accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. The process is reviewed and evaluated. Documentation that the process yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available and communicated to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of schools continuous improvement plans •District Quality Assurance Review plans that document two-way communication on district and school effectiveness and learning, thinking, and life skills •The district strategic plan •CRCT data presentations Focus Walks Free and reduced lunch statistics Professional learning example Principal data briefing schedule Comprehensive Communication Plan RCPS Cycle for Results Site-based facilitator training System Improvement Goals Title I plan Title I targeted assistance plan 	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Areas of Strength

A system strength is engaging stakeholders in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success. As evidenced by the artifacts provided in the indicator 1.1 folder, the review, revision and communication of the purpose statement is clearly documented; the process is formalized and implemented with fidelity on a regular schedule; the process includes participation by representatives from stakeholder groups; and it clearly focuses on student success.

The mission of the Rockdale County School System, the boundless learning community where students aspire to their dreams and success is expected of all, is to ensure that each student performs at his/her highest academic level and is a successful, participatory member of our global society through a system distinguished by

- fearless advocates for students;
- community alliance for students' success;
- empowering students to shape their own future;
- infinite learning opportunities for all; and
- customized measures of individual success.

Rockdale County's comprehensive strategic plan includes six strategies.

- I. We will create a rigorous system of teaching and learning that empowers students to define and achieve their educational success.
- II. We will create safe and supportive learning environments that inspire and activate the love of learning.

- III. We will create a culture that nurtures individual uniqueness and embraces the diversity of our school community.
- IV. We will provide optimum resources to support a world-class educational system.
- V. We will continuously maximize the district's capacity through the individual growth of each person.
- VI. We will build a community alliance through the meaningful inclusion and activation of all stakeholders.

A visual of the strategic plan, "RCPS Model for Continuous Growth", is included in the 1.1 artifact folder. Other artifacts supporting the system's process for and communication of the strategic plan include step-by-step guides for action team leaders, PowerPoints used during team trainings, facilitator training sign-in sheets, monitoring information, timelines, PowerPoints used by the Superintendent to communicate the plan to stakeholders, screenshots of our website, an excerpt from the parent handbook, the strategic plan, strategic plan brochures, action team minutes and the system's communication plan. On the student surveys, 97% of our elementary students believe that their principal and teachers want every student to learn and 73% of our secondary students agree or strongly agree that their school provides programs and services to help them succeed.

As evidenced by the rating for indicator 1.2 and supporting artifacts, RCPS ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success through a site-based plan. Eighty-three percent of parents strongly agree or agree that the schools' purpose statement clearly focuses on student success.

At the system level, the Executive Director of Information and Community Relations serves as the district strategic plan facilitator. In addition, RCPS employs a Continuous Improvement/Quality Assurance Coach who monitors the development, review and implementation of the site-based planning process. Artifacts supporting the development of individual site-based plans include a step-by-step guide for action team leaders to ensure site-based plans are aligned to the system plan, a renewal timeline for the 2017 site-based plans, sign-in sheets from facilitator trainings, an example status report, an alignment rubric which monitors alignment of each site-based plan to the system plan, and the job description of the Continuous Improvement/Quality Assurance Coach.

Driven by our strategic plan, school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and support challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students. Staff survey data indicate that schools' purpose statements are based on shared values: 81% strongly agree or agree. This belief is further evidenced by the increase in enrollment and offerings in Advanced Placement courses at each high school, Rockdale Career Academy, and Rockdale Virtual Campus. The system has also identified growth through the increased enrollment of students in Dual Enrollment through partnerships forged with Georgia Perimeter College and Georgia Piedmont Technical College. The dual enrollment courses located at the RCA campus are available to all high school students.

Other school specialty options include: Rockdale Magnet School for Science and Technology, Rockdale Open Campus, Rockdale Institute for Advanced Technology, Microsoft I.T. Academies, Memorial STEM Academy for Environmental Studies, Honey Creek Elementary STEM Program, Sims Elementary AVID, CJ Hicks International Baccalaureate Candidate School, and Alpha Academy. Along with these current in-demand options, the strategic plan also provides for the planning of future school-choice options to better serve the career and academic interests of RCPS students. These differentiated learning opportunities provide the offerings necessary to ensure that students are college and career ready. Finally, RCPS employs an Academic Rigor Coordinator who supports administrators, teachers and students in the achievement of excellence through content and academic rigor. The artifacts in the indicator 1.3 folder demonstrate a strong commitment to a shared vision and culture of success.

To ensure that leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process which provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning, quarterly data briefings are conducted with the Superintendent, cabinet members, district directors, coordinators, and principals. This documented, systematic measure ensures that current and comprehensive data on student, school and system performance is maintained. Additionally, the briefings require an analyses of a broad range of data used to identify goals for the improvement of student learning conditions; action planning; accountability for intervention and strategies; and improvement goals with measurable performance targets. At the school level, principals conduct similar briefings with faculty, staff, school councils and PTO/PTAs. Individual student performance is shared with all parents via benchmark letters, report cards and conferences. Sample artifacts for indicator 1.4 include the RCPS Cycle for Results, data briefing agendas, focus walk data, Title I plan, and a school-based professional learning plan. Eighty-four percent of staff strongly agree or agree that their schools' continuous improvement process is based on data, goals, actions, and specific and measurable results leading to growth.

As a Race to the Top district, RCPS implemented the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) to assess and improve teacher quality. The system also implemented the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) to gauge and improve leader quality. Two professional learning institutes, aligned to TKES, were held In July and October. These institutes allowed each teacher to register for sessions based on targeted standards; thus creating a customized schedule for each teacher. Teacher leaders facilitated sessions at the October institute, increasing teacher capacity. Professional learning, centered around the TKES standards, is sustained at the school levels through on-line e-libraries and modules, site-based professional learning plans, push-ins, Professional Learning Communities, and professional learning resources. An induction program is provided for induction phase teachers.

Professional learning for RCPS leaders centers around the LKES standards as well as topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness and improved instruction. Leaders are provided continual professional learning through Instructional Support Team (IST) meetings, principal and AP meetings, on-line modules and e-libraries. Additionally, induction programs are provided for new leaders. All leaders have been trained in the Data Teams Process and on cultural competency. It is a strategic plan goal that 100% of RCPS employees receive cultural competency training. RCPS leaders work collaboratively with the Office of Support Services to provide the training by the end of the school year.

Areas for Growth

Sixty-six percent of parents strongly agree or agree that the school's purpose statement is formally reviewed and revised with their involvement while 77% of staff strongly agree or agree that the school's purpose statement is formally reviewed and revised with involvement from stakeholders. Reflecting on this perception data, RCPS will expand avenues for stakeholder involvement in this process.

Actions to Sustain Strengths

RCPS believes that it is important to sustain the development and monitoring of the system strategic plan and the school site-based plans. To sustain these strengths, system leadership will continue to link activities to the strategic plan, making a connection between current actions and implementation of the plan. Additionally, the system and schools will continue to review and develop action plans to move the system forward and monitor progress via performance indicators.

Plans for Improvement

The system strategic planning process aims to further engage involvement from stakeholders. Strategy 2, Action Plan 4 indicates that we will build a school system blog as a strategic communication tool, where pertinent issues and concerns can be presented and discussed. Strategy 6, Action Plan 2 indicates the creation of an alumni group, who can become more active as stakeholders in our system. Strategy 6, Action Plan 13, aims to increase parent participation by reducing barriers such as transportation, educational language and time.

Governance and Leadership

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

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	Policies and practices support the system's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices promote conditions that support student learning, effective instruction, and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices regarding professional growth of all staff. Policies and practices provide requirements, direction for, and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Professional development plans •Student handbooks •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •Staff handbooks •School handbooks •Scheduling Agenda Barksdale Elementary (BES) Budget Worksheet BES Cycle for Results BES PL Worksheet Strategic Plans: Barksdale Elem., J H House Elem., Davis Middle, Rockdale Career Academy, System Davis Middle Grading Policy Finance Dept PL Fiscal Management FY14 Goals IT Training Registrar Meeting Dates Model for Continuous Growth Professional Learning Policy Cycle for Results Homework Policy Mission & Beliefs Special Ed and T & L PL Pre-K Training requirements InfiniteCampus Training 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	The governing body has a process to ensure that its decisions and actions are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a code of ethics, and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The governing body complies with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations, and functions as a cohesive unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Proof of legal counsel •Governing authority training plan •Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest •Governing code of ethics •Board Priorities AdvancED Staff Survey Results AdvancED Parent Survey Results Board Goals and Objectives Board State Recognition News Release 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	The governing body protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for improvement in student learning and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations of the system and its schools. The governing body maintains a distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of system and school leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communications regarding governing authority actions •District strategic plan •Examples of school improvement plans •Roles and responsibilities of school leadership •Roles and responsibilities of district leadership •Stakeholder input and feedback •Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation •Board priorities; code of ethics; actions; conflict of interest AdvancED Parent and Staff Survey Results ES, MS and HS Points Review of Administrative Rules Safety Net Budget Form 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders and staff throughout the system align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. They expect all personnel to maintain high standards and to hold students to high standards in all courses of study. All leaders and staff are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system support innovation, collaboration, shared leadership, and professional growth. The culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan •Professional development offerings and plans •Examples of collaboration and shared leadership •Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs •Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction •Barksdale Elementary Meeting Planner 2013-2014 •Barksdale and JH House PLC •PTO Policies •Safety Net Budget Form for SY13-14 •School Council •Student Government Association •Teacher Think Tanks •Title I Parent Involvement FY2014 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	Leaders communicate effectively with appropriate and varied representatives from stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback and respond to stakeholders, work collaboratively on system and school improvement efforts, and provide and support meaningful leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' efforts result in measurable, active stakeholder participation, engagement in the system and its schools, a sense of community, and ownership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Minutes from meetings with stakeholders •Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action •Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys •Survey responses •Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan •Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan •AdvancED district groups by standard •RCPS Community Projects Policy •SAC Agendas 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	The focus of the criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation is improving professional practice throughout the system and improving student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are regularly implemented. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice throughout the system and improve student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation •13-14 Instructional Support Team (IST) Schedule AdvancED Student Survey Results ES AdvancED Student Survey Results MS HS Growth Plan Goals and Conference Records Leadership Development New Teacher Support Numbers and Operations Support PL eWeekly newsletter Professional Personnel Evaluation Policy RCPS PL District Day Program Guide SY14 Evaluation Process Target Dates for HR 2013-2014 	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Areas of Strength

The Rockdale County Public Schools (RCPS) Board of Education (BOE) is a strong governing body that implements policies and practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools. Strategic planning is an integral part of RCPS that is supported by the BOE. Through collaboration with community stakeholders, system and school level plans are developed to address the needs of all learners and support effective instruction and assessment that produces equitable and challenging learning experiences. These plans are reviewed on a regular basis and used as a blueprint for district and school decisions. A copy of the RCPS Model for Continuous Growth is included as an artifact to illustrate the system strategic plan's outreach to all stakeholders. A copy of the system strategic plan and several school plans, including Rockdale Career Academy, are included as artifacts. In addition to the strategic plans, RCPS implements the use of the Cycle for Results. This cycle ensures a consistent instructional framework and promotes the practice of using assessments, data analysis, teaching, and reassessment to support the learning of all students. The BOE supports professional learning through policy that lays the foundation for the expectation of professional learning, in alignment with the Georgia Department of Education, including an advisory council of school and department representatives that participates in the decision making process of the RCPS Professional Learning Plan. This policy, along with sample professional learning plans, is included as an artifact. Multiple policies are in place to provide requirements, direction and oversight of fiscal management. Some of these include the school financial guidelines, fiscal management policy and school budget allocations and plans. As evidenced in these artifacts, including the FY 14 Goals, financial decisions are in alignment with the RCPS Strategic Plan.

The RCPS BOE operates responsibly and functions effectively. Board Members directly participate in ongoing training on board governance, roles and responsibilities and board ethics and commit annually to following a strict code of ethics to which they hold each other accountable. The RCPS Board adheres to a strict conflict of interest and nepotism policy and retains full-time General Counsel to ensure that the Board and the district at all levels comply with Georgia and federal law. The Board has been recognized as a Georgia School Board Association's (GSBA) Board of Distinction and most recently has earned the status of being a GSBA Quality Board. These recognitions demonstrate the Board's determination to perform at the highest level. These qualities are evidenced in artifacts found in the Board Policies manual, with a sample included.

The RCPS BOE supports and recognizes site-based management. As evidenced in board policies, the Superintendent Contract, and other artifacts, the BOE permits the creation of administrative rules as long as they are not in conflict with BOE policies. Through board priorities, goals and objectives, and solid fiscal management practices, schools are able to design and implement opportunities for all students that support learning and effective instruction and assessment. Site-based management artifacts, including SY14 teacher allotments, a school points plan, and safety net budget, are in alignment with district and school improvement goals and plans and show the flexibility of schools to use their resources to best meet their needs.

Guided by the system purpose and direction as outlined in the RCPS Strategic Plan, all levels of the system align decisions and actions toward continuous improvement. As stated in the system strategic plan, all personnel and students are held to high standards, with collective accountability, collaboration and a sense of community. The RCPS Superintendent maintains an open door policy and is accessible. Monthly Superintendent Video Connections are shared out to all staff members, providing information that is timely and relevant to the system as a whole. Meetings are conducted regularly with many stakeholder groups to provide community feedback and input. These groups include community and business leaders, parents and students. Principals and teachers are also given the opportunity to share openly and honestly with our superintendent through the Principal Pulse Check and Teacher Think Tank meetings. Individual schools implement a School Council, PTO, and Title 1 Parent Involvement policy to support a decision making process that is in alignment with system and school strategic plan expectations. School communities are provided the chance to give feedback on prospective administrative candidates when a position opens at their school. The Office of Community and Student Support conducts outreach to the community through the implementation of Parent Academy, in addition to Title 1 parent outreach at individual schools through workshops and informational sessions.

The system's supervision, observation and evaluation process is also noted as a strength. As mentioned and evidenced earlier, an RCPS Administrative Policy states that "Rockdale County Public Schools (RCPS) maintains a three-year comprehensive plan for staff and professional development which describes, establishes, coordinates, evaluates, and maintains programs that address the assessed needs and system priorities for all school personnel." As reflected in the artifacts, the policy is strong in the area of professional learning as it pertains to certified staff. The RCPS Professional Learning plan provides for continued learning of teachers, school administration and other certified employees through system based learning and individual school professional learning plans that are aligned to the system strategic plan, individual school strategic plans, surveys and student performance data. Support for the evaluation process is provided by Human Resources and Professional Learning at the beginning of each year through the creation and sharing of HR Target Dates that communicate the cycle for observations, goal-setting and conferences with teachers and administrators. Feedback is given to staff members on a regular basis using the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) to strengthen the instructional program and determine professional learning needs. Refer to the artifact in 2.5 titled "RCPS District Day Program Guide" for an example of how professional learning offerings are aligned to the TKES standards and staff members are given the opportunity to choose courses to attend. In addition, the RCPS Professional Learning department supports the continued growth of all leaders through monthly Instructional Support Team (IST) sessions aligned to LKES, RCPS Cycle for Results and the system strategic plan. RCPS is also committed to developing talents from within. RCPS Professional Learning provides support for new teachers, teachers who are in need of additional assistance, and new and aspiring leaders.

The AdvancEd Survey results from the various stakeholder groups supports the stance that RCPS is strong in governance and leadership. On the parent survey, 73% support the statement that their school's governing body operates responsibility and functions effectively and ranks schools between a 3.32 and 4.49. Sixty-six percent of parents support the statement that the governing body does not interfere with the operation or leadership of their school, with schools ranking from a 3.26 to 4.22. Likewise, 82% of staff members completing the survey agree with the statement that our school's governing body or school board complies with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations with school's averaging from 3.52 to 4.72. Approximately 77% of staff members also agree with the statement that our school's governing body or school board maintains a distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of school leadership by rankings averaging from a 3.2 to a 4.46.

Areas of Need

While there is a plan developed each year at the system and school levels for professional learning of certified staff, a written professional learning plan is not evident for all RCPS classified positions. However, artifacts support high levels of training are provided to classified personnel (food and nutrition, transportation, technology, business services, human resources, buildings and grounds) to ensure all state and federal requirements for training and certifications met.

Sustainability

Sustainability for areas of strength is evidenced each year as various levels of the system set priorities and goals to guide them through the upcoming year. This is evidenced from the BOE Priorities, FY Budget Goals, professional learning plans and the creation of school improvement goals. Sustainability is evident through the practice of regular reviews of system and school-based strategic plans and programs, with feedback reported to professional learning, and the Division of Teaching and Learning. The RCPS Model for Continuous Growth illustrates the outreach of the system strategic plan to all stakeholders through its mission, vision and action plans. The RCPS Cycle For Results promotes a practice of review, implementation, reflection and redevelopment. Quarterly, the Office of Teaching and Learning conducts an analysis of the most recent district testing and provides feedback to schools at each level. In addition, individual schools monitor student performance and provide feedback to the RCPS Cabinet and Office of Teaching and Learning. At least yearly, individual schools are expected to review current practices, compare to student achievement results and develop plans in alignment to district and school goals to propel students' learning forward.

Plans to Improve Areas of Need

The Professional Learning Advisory Council (PLAC) will review existing professional learning plans for classified positions and will monitor the development of plans for all classified staff.

Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	Curriculum and learning experiences in each course/class provide all students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills. There is some evidence to indicate curriculum and learning experiences prepare students for success at the next level. Like courses/classes have equivalent learning expectations across the system. Teachers in all schools individualize some learning activities for each student in a way that supports achievement of expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning expectations for different courses and programs • Course, program, or school schedules • Student work across courses or programs • Course or program descriptions • Lesson plans • Survey responses from program leaders receiving students from previous programs, schools, or grade-levels • Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices • Posted learning objectives • Enrollment patterns for various courses and programs • Descriptions of instructional techniques • CCGPS 6-8 curriculum CIA alignment training Writing scoring guide Academic Showcase RCPS progress report and report card dates Measurement topics for all courses Assessment descriptions EIP program guide Elementary course offerings ES, MS, and HS point system Gifted handbook Intervention process RCPS performance targets Special Education Handbook Teaching and Learning Division accomplishments 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	Using data from student assessments and an examination of professional practice, system and school personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose. There is a process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction, and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level. The continuous improvement process ensures that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Common assessments •Standards-based report cards •Program descriptions •Profile of educational model or delivery system •Benchmarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIA unpacking guides Curriculum maps Social studies measurement topics Analyzing student works Elementary Think Tank Unit planning guide Honors Course Curriculum Math units High school parent guide Middle school parent standards-based grading brochure Enrichment Camp information (ES, MS, HS) 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	Teachers throughout the district plan and use instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills. Teachers personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of students when necessary. Teachers use instructional strategies that require students to apply knowledge and skills, integrate content and skills with other disciplines, and use technologies as instructional resources and learning tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation •Authentic assessments •Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource •Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool •Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge •Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs •Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices •Interdisciplinary projects •CIA training manual data training DI training materials District Professional Learning Institute materials Enrichment Camps Curriculum for Health and PE (CIA training) Technology Teacher of the Year winner submission C.J. Hicks IB planner ES math lesson plan CMS Career Fair Elementary parent academy Gifted service models Parent-student contracts for SAT prep RCPS Honors Curriculum Course RCPS Lead Honors Teacher agenda Student work sample 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	System and school leaders formally and consistently monitor instructional practices through supervision and evaluation procedures to ensure that they 1) are aligned with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning, 2) are teaching the approved curriculum, 3) are directly engaged with all students in the oversight of their learning, and 4) use content-specific standards of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Curriculum maps •Supervision and evaluation procedures •Documentation of collection of lesson plans, grade books, or other data record systems •Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions •Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices •Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process •Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs •Professional development offerings and plans tied to the prescribed education program, instructional strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and student success •Administrative observation log Annual evaluation summary ASCD Principal Compass training materials Curriculum maps Instructional planning guides ELEOT analysis Employee newsletters Professional Learning Plan-DMS Instructional planning guides-5th grade math & social studies LKES (leader evaluation) orientation TKES (teacher evaluation) orientation Mentor Principal meeting agenda Mentor-Protégé list Metro RESA TSS description Induction programs New Vision Leadership Development 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	All system staff participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both informally and formally. Collaboration often occurs across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions. Staff members have been trained to implement a formal process that promotes discussion about student learning and the conditions that support student learning. Learning, using, and discussing the results of inquiry practices such as action research, the examination of student work, reflection, study teams, and peer coaching occur regularly among most system personnel. System personnel indicate that collaboration causes improvement results in instructional practice, system effectiveness, and student performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Common language, protocols and reporting tools •Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees •Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings •Professional development funding to promote professional learning communities •Peer coaching guidelines and procedures •Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning •Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration •Examples of cross curricular or program projects, interdisciplinary instruction, and classroom action research projects •Mentor-Mentee handbook TSS monthly support first grade collaborative meeting agenda Instructional Support Team agenda classroom intervention example Coordinate Algebra lesson plan district PL institute elementary principal agenda Focus School math training 6-8 science collaborative agenda peer observation feedback Professional learning updates Cycle for Results elementary collaborative meetings 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	All teachers throughout the system use an instructional process that informs students of learning expectations and standards of performance. Exemplars are often provided to guide and inform students. The process includes multiple measures, including formative assessments, to inform the ongoing modification of instruction and provide data for possible curriculum revision. The process provides students with specific and timely feedback about their learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction •Benchmark analysis Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment training materials CIA lesson plan guide Exemplar-grade 2, 8th grade science and 2nd grade social studies Quarterly instructional planning guides Lesson plans Standards-based classroom model 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	System personnel are engaged in mentoring, coaching, and induction programs that are consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching, learning, and the conditions that support learning. These programs set expectations for all system personnel and include measures of performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs with references to district and school beliefs and values about teaching and learning •Records of meetings and informal feedback sessions •Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff •Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices •Induction programs- principal, AP, teacher Teacher Support Specialist meeting schedules elementary teacher induction sign-in induction principal survey New teacher orientation agenda secondary teacher induction agenda TIP brochure TKES (teacher evaluation process) guide for new teachers 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	Programs that engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education are designed and implemented. System and school personnel regularly inform families of their children's learning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Performance-based report cards •Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Volunteer program with variety of options for participation •List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days •Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress •Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process •Student advisement materials standards-based grading parent brochure folder w/parent information & opportunities grade level newsletter curriculum night ppt. parent volunteer request parent workshop agenda standards-based grading agenda HCE school event calendar teacher growth plan booklet 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	School personnel implement and participate in a structure designed and evaluated by the system that gives them long-term interaction with individual students, allowing them to build strong relationships over time with the student. All students may participate in the structure. The structure allows the school employee to gain insight into and serve as an advocate for the student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Curriculum and activities of structures for adults advocating on behalf of students •Survey results •List of students matched to adults who advocate on their behalf •Master schedule with time for formalized structure •Mentor-mentee handbook Title I with parent involvement Parent referrals for student counseling Prevention and Intervention (P&I) caseload stats behavioral services referral P&I handbook P&I program guide Seven Challenges schedule STARS newsletter Talk About It fact sheet Parent report card guide & report card CJH newsletter Fall Literacy night IB parent question & answer form Community service logs testing calendar Volunteer letter & program 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	Teachers across the system use common grading and reporting policies, processes, and procedures based on clearly defined criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These policies, processes, and procedures are implemented in all schools across grade levels and courses. Stakeholders are aware of the policies, processes, and procedures. The policies, processes, and procedures are regularly evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices •Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting •District quality control procedures including the monitoring of grading practices across all schools •Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs •Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting •Parent report card guide & report card 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning that is aligned with the system's purpose and direction. Professional development is based on assessment of needs of the system. The program builds capacity among all professional and support staff. The program is systematically evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Evaluation tools for professional learning •Survey results •District professional development plan involving the district and all schools •Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs •SAI survey results Building and Grounds PL On-line modules cultural competency district professional learning institutes endorsements iPad training IST training New teacher orientation PL updates PL institutes school-based PL plans instructional strategies training PL evaluation feedback form student led conferences - PL 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	System and school personnel use data to identify unique learning needs of all students at all levels of proficiency as well as other learning needs (such as second languages). System and school personnel stay current on research related to unique characteristics of learning (such as learning styles, multiple intelligences, personality type indicators) and provide or coordinate related learning support services to all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services •List of learning support services and student population served by such services •Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning •RCPS Academic Report academic summit benchmark analysis cultural competency ELA reading & writing PL instructional strategies PL school improvement goals Teacher Support Specialist workshops writing PL learning support intervention process performance targets sample data briefings 	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Rockdale County Public Schools (RCPS) has a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that will (1) ensure educational equity; (2) accelerate student achievement by supporting each student's unique learning needs and individual interests; and (3) help each student achieve his/her greatest potential through a wide variety of strategies, supports and resources that are appropriate to their interests, abilities and learning styles. As a high-need, minority-majority school system, creating equity for the diverse student population in RCPS requires careful consideration of the needs of each child. Since 2010, with the receipt of a state Race to the Top award, Georgia and RCPS have built momentum for innovation and reform in the four core educational assurance areas of (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and informing teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals; and (4) turning around lowest-achieving schools.

Likewise, RCPS began transitioning to the mastery instructional approach a number of years ago as schools worked to increase student achievement. RCPS utilizes a data-driven inquiry cycle, RCPS Cycle for Results to ensure a proficiency-based model of learning at all schools. The Cycle for Results outlines 6 steps to increase student achievement: (1) collect and analyze multiple data sources aligned to standards, (2) plan and deliver standards-based instruction, (3) conduct balanced formative assessments aligned to standards, (4) utilize formative assessment data to monitor progress, (5) adjust instruction: align intervention/enrichment to standards achievement, and (6) assess for mastery, repeat the cycle.

The Cycle for Results guides the system's curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices to ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across grades and courses. Data collected from multiple sources are used as indicators to determine the status of curriculum and learning experiences in courses/classes throughout the system. It is from this data that goals for student learning are formulated. As a result, it is critical the system and its schools have sufficient data and examine it in enough depth to ascertain the current levels of student proficiency.

Multiple national and state assessments such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), SAT, ACT, CogAT, End of Course Test (EOCT), Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT) and the Georgia Writing Test are utilized to measure students' current levels of understanding and proficiency with respect to same-grade comparison groups at school, system, state or national levels. RCPS Choices for Personalized Learning utilizes data from EXPLORE (8th grade), PLAN (10th grade), and the PSAT to personalize students' learning. Results are reviewed with students during advisement sessions to guide students toward corresponding career pathways. Additional data sources such as benchmarks, mock writing assessments, and common formative assessments are developed at the system and school level to measure the extent to which students are meeting the content standards of the curriculum.

To provide all students with challenging and equitable opportunities to develop learning skills, thinking skills and life skills aligned with the system and school purpose, additional data sources such as STAR Early Literacy, Scholastic Reading Inventory, portfolios, Write Score, ACCESS for ELs, 504, and RTI data are considered to determine student mastery and aid progress. In addition to looking at student data, the system reviews Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES), Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES), focus walks, demographic data, school processes, attendance data, discipline data, school safety data, and graduation rates. Data from school climate surveys, Teacher Think Tanks, and perception surveys are used to identify levels of expectation for student learning, the effectiveness of collaborative structures, and the understanding of school and system goals for student achievement.

To ensure alignment, curriculum, instruction and assessments are reviewed or revised at the system and school level. The system employs a

full-time Assessment Development Specialist to design formative benchmarks. Benchmark assessments are developed for tested courses, and data is analyzed at the system and school level. These assessments are reviewed by members of the Quality Assurance Review Team (QuART) before they are finalized. A formal data report, which includes a plan of action, is developed by the Division of Teaching and Learning and provided to all instructional and support staff after each benchmark. Each building level administrative team engages in detailed data briefings with the RCPS cabinet after each benchmark. Data briefings follow benchmark and state assessment administrations. They include discussions focused on all available data points and mechanisms in place to support students who are not performing at expected levels. During data briefings, principals also identify areas of specific support needs for the entire school community—students, teachers, parents and administrators. Administrative teams lead customized data analysis conversations with site-based teams. Frequent and timely feedback from instructors is utilized to adjust future assessments and develop plans for remediation and enrichment.

It is the system's expectation that school-based leaders disaggregate and analyze multiple data sources mentioned above to develop a plan for improvement based on the identified needs. Examination of multiple sources of data has enabled schools and the district to determine the current status of student learning, identify needs for improvement, and develop strategies for immediate and long-range improvement. Data is used to guide instructional planning and delivery, refine diagnostic assessments, develop the capacity to better implement research-based instructional strategies that put that curriculum within the reach of students, and strengthen collaborative structures that enable teachers to begin the process of collectively working toward a shared goal of improved student achievement. To provide extended instructional support and content specific professional learning, the district employs three math coaches, one science coach, and a school improvement coach. Content specific instructional support and professional learning is also provided by the curriculum coordinators based on system, school, content and instructor specific needs.

Areas for growth:

Although data collected from multiple sources is used as indicators to determine the status of student learning and system effectiveness RCPS recognizes that the focus is primarily on state tested courses. To ensure a comprehensive assessment system focused on continuous improvement, the system will expand accountability measures for non-tested subjects to refine and improve levels of teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Plans for Improving Areas for Growth:

The Georgia Department of Education approved Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to assist systems in utilizing system-identified achievement growth measures in non-tested courses. This will be a required component of the teacher evaluation program (Teacher Keys Effectiveness System) beginning 2014-2015. As a Race to the Top district, RCPS is currently participating in the pilot implementation of SLOs and has developed a comprehensive plan. This plan has guided the development of the assessments, the setting of the growth percentiles, and the administration of the pre and post assessments for 70 non-tested subjects. The baseline data allows teachers to plan for student success by ensuring that instruction is moving students, teachers, and schools toward the common vision of exemplary instruction and high levels of student academic growth.

Sustainability:

The Cycle for Results is the process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level. To provide continuous improvement to the Cycle for Results, the district is exploring other research-based methods to ensure that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction and assessment. To sustain these strengths, data teams are being developed and trained across the system to focus on action research, examination of student work, reflection, and peer coaching.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment:

During the 2011-12 school year, RCPS implemented a data warehousing system (Tetra Data and SchoolNet) for the purpose of making

student performance data more accessible to educators. This system enables teachers to readily access summative and formative student performance data. SchoolNet has enabled staff to efficiently identify individual student needs and to make instructional adjustments customized to each student's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are able to engage in data analysis themselves without having to rely on administrators to provide data for them. Further, teachers are able to organize grading and reporting around curricular standards in ways that empower students and parents to engage more effectively in the learning cycle. Stakeholder feedback is used to guide the data analysis and standards based reporting process.

Utilizing the Cycle for Results approach, educators can respond quickly and effectively to key questions:

- (1) Are appropriate standards (elements/tasks) being taught?
- (2) If so, at what rate are students mastering the standard(s)?
- (3) How do you know? What is the concrete evidence?
- (4) What does the teacher do when students aren't learning at the required level? What is the concrete evidence of mastery after this intervention and what is the success rate?
- (5) What does the teacher do when students are performing beyond expectation? What is the concrete evidence of enrichment for these students?

Currently, master schedules at all elementary schools include interventions and safety nets within the school day. Using assessment results, elementary schools identify the curricular areas of strength and weakness for individual students in order to build specific caseloads. Using a flexible grouping approach, students' academic needs are addressed within an intervention block. As student progress is monitored, these caseloads change, ensuring that students are receiving instruction specifically designed to address their individual needs. The same approach is applied at the middle school level, utilizing connections remediation/acceleration and enrichment interventions. High schools have implemented a FLEX period into their master schedules so that these same types of individualized, during-the-day interventions can be provided as well. Utilizing these processes, teachers and principals develop and implement strategic systems to address individual student needs. In addition, a system of standards-based assessment, grading, and reporting has been implemented at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. RCPS utilizes standards-based mastery grading and reporting at all grade levels, including high school. This approach has transformed our grading into a system that enables educators to focus on mastery of rigorous curriculum standards and monitor student progress. Instead of organizing grading according to activities, grades are now aligned to standards and key curriculum areas. Within this reform, teachers have learned to place emphasis on both standards mastery and learner behaviors as these components are tracked and reported separately. Achievement grades now reflect student progress on curricular skills and concepts.

Based on the data presented in the Advanc-Ed survey 75% of the parents strongly agree or agree that their students' progress is presented in easy to understand language. Curriculum maps and pacing guides are used by the teachers for lesson planning and instructional delivery of course content. To further ensure consistency, instructors at the elementary level are provided support by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction to develop Integrated Performance Task (IPT). The IPTs were designed to use instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection and development of critical thinking skills. The IPTs are accessible to all instructors via SchoolNet. Grade level specific professional learning tied specifically to the IPTs is offered to all elementary instructors by all curriculum coordinators. Secondary teachers are also provided support in developing and implementing common performance tasks.

Seventy-six percent of RCPS parents strongly agree or agree that teachers provide an equitable curriculum that meets their student's needs. These efforts are supported through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations. These practices were emphasized as; teachers participated in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (CIA) training. During this three-part training, teachers unpack the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS), determine levels of cognitive demand, plan for instruction for multiple levels and assess for understanding. Embedded within this training is the correlation of CIA to the ten Teacher Assessments on Performance Standards (TAPS) for the TKES to gauge classroom practice and improve student learning. The expected level of performance is proficient.

As a Race to the Top district, RCPS is continuing pilot implementation of Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) to improve and assess teacher and leader effectiveness with the goal of increasing student achievement. Both TKES and LKES provide ongoing feedback and a deliberate practice component designed to allow teachers and leaders to grow in their own practice, resulting in incremental gains in student learning. These evaluation systems incorporate multiple measures of performance, including student growth percentiles.

A minimum of four informal and two formal observations are completed on each teacher annually. Using a performance appraisal rubric, credentialed administrators assess teachers by conducting observations, including walkthroughs and thorough documentation of a teacher's practice. Additionally, at the beginning of the year, RCPS teachers complete a self-assessment on the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS). This self-assessment is reviewed collaboratively by the teacher and administrator to establish three growth plan SMART goals and complete professional learning planning. Two of the goals are aligned to identified standards of focus; the other goal is student performance-based. The goal setting process was institutionalized for RCPS in 2009. As a component of each teacher's summative evaluation, students complete an online survey of instructional practices developed by the Georgia Department of Education. The survey of instructional practices is used by the school administrator to inform the final rating for the corresponding TAPS standards.

RCPS school principals and assistant principals are evaluated using LKES beginning with the 2012-2013 pilot implementation year. LKES is a common evaluation system that allows the state to ensure consistency and comparability across systems, based on a common definition of leader effectiveness. The LAPS component of LKES provides evaluators with a qualitative, rubrics-based evaluation method by which they can measure leader performance related to quality performance standards. LAPS offer a balance between structure and flexibility. It is prescriptive in that it defines common purposes and expectations, thereby guiding effective practice. At the same time, it provides flexibility by allowing for creativity and individual leader initiative. The overarching goal of LKES is to support the continuous growth and development of each leader by monitoring, analyzing, and applying pertinent data compiled within a system of meaningful feedback. Each leader develops SMART goals designed to foster growth in LAPS. As a component of each leader's summative evaluation, staff completes an online climate survey developed by the Georgia Department of Education. The results of the climate survey are used by the evaluator to inform the final rating for the corresponding LAPS standards.

RCPS provides support to new teachers and those with less than three years of teaching experience through the Teacher Induction Program (TIP). During preplanning, these teachers attend New Teacher Orientation in which they partake in professional development activities that will help them transition into education effectively. These same teachers return two additional times during the year to complete additional courses specific to teachers with their same level of teaching experience.

Additionally, induction phase teachers have opportunities for professional growth with master teacher mentoring and interactions with professional learning communities that target areas for instructional growth. It is the system's expectation, that novice teachers are paired with a teacher support specialist (TSS) who serves as a mentor to the new teacher. At a minimum, it is the district expectation that the TSS meet with the teacher at least once a month to check on progress. The induction phase teachers have an induction team consisting of the principal, TSS mentor, and a member of the Office of Professional Learning. The induction team meets quarterly to discuss the new teacher's progress with the TKES and the Georgia Teacher Duties and Responsibilities Instrument and to monitor the teacher's performance goals.

New principals and assistant principal who are in the beginning stages of their leadership role or those who may be experienced, but are new to the system, are provided support through monthly principal/assistant principal induction meetings. New principals are required to attend a Beginning Principal's Academy. New principals are provided a system level peer mentor and a leadership coach from outside of the system. These programs set high expectations for all system personnel and include valid and reliable measures of performance. All employees

understand the system's expectations of their performance and how this performance will be assessed.

The system is dedicated to individualizing learning experiences for each student in a way that supports the achievement of rigorous expectations. Significant progress with STEM focused programs at elementary, middle, and high schools is noted. To support the teaching and learning of science at the elementary level, all eleven schools have at least one science lab. An International Baccalaureate program has been initiated at one elementary school. The school system has implemented several enhanced options for students that transcend traditional boundaries, including Open Campus, Rockdale Virtual Campus, Rockdale Magnet School for Science and Technology, and Rockdale Career Academy. The system offers learning experiences through, Advance Placement courses, gifted and honors courses and flexible scheduling to support enrichment and remediation. The system and its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their student's education and keep them informed of their student's learning progress. Currently, RCPS provides opportunities for students and parents to understand how to structure their learning progress through developing goals and measuring their progress through annual student-led conferences (conferences include the parents, student and staff advisor. Additional personnel are added to the conference as needed, i.e. learning support case manager, counselor, EL staff member, administrators, etc.). Other mediums of communication include the Parent Portal via Infinite Campus, Standards Based report records, school and district webpages and School Messenger. RCPS also provides information during district Parent Academies twice a year, College, Careers, and More Night (annual), and College Goal Sunday (annual) during which students and parents can learn about the college application process, financial aid, meet with college admissions officers, and fill out the FAFSA. In addition, schools conduct parent universities and special college and career nights. RCPS also developed a college and career readiness website with links to resources for parents and students. Based on the Advanc-Ed Parent survey, 73.20% of the parents strongly agree or agree the system provided opportunity for the stakeholders to be involved in the schools.

RCPS also provides work-based learning opportunities such as internships, cooperative education and apprenticeships are available for qualified students in all CTAE pathways. Opportunities for students to receive articulated credit with Georgia Piedmont Technical College exist within the following pathways: Small Business Development, Law and Justice, Early Childhood Education. Students enrolled in the Teacher Education Pathway who successfully complete the required criteria receive credit for the Introduction to Education course within the University System of Georgia. Dual Enrollment options are also available.

The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels. Opportunities for all staff members to participate in frequent collaborative meetings, informally, and formally is a strength for RCPS. Opportunities include, but are not limited to system grade level/content collaborative PLC's, strategic plan action teams, system level IST, and Principal PLC's. System personnel indicate that collaboration positively impacts student achievement. One result of these high levels of collaboration is the integration of various initiatives and goals. For example, in 2013-14, two separate professional learning institutes were provided which linked professional learning sessions to areas of need identified through the TKES evaluation process. School administrators in collaboration with teachers selected specific session to attend. Additionally, RCPS provides staff with ongoing cultural diversity training to ensure that teachers, administrators, and all other personnel have the knowledge and skills to work with and proactively engage students from all cultural backgrounds and family structures.

RCPS continues to provide sustainable training for RCPS staff that vertically and horizontally integrates diverse teacher and administrator teams aligned to individual strengths, leadership abilities, and interests to promote the following essential elements: forming authentic and caring relationships with students, using curriculum that honors each student's culture and life experience, shifting instructional strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students, communicating respect for each student's learning style, holding consistent and high expectations for all learners, providing ongoing cultural competency mentoring and support programs for ALL employees. The Office of Professional Learning houses a resource library comprised of professional learning books, e-books, videos, and resources that are available for individual and school check-out.

Continuous growth and development is achieved through critical feedback and data. In 2010, RCPS initiated district-led focus walks at each school. The purpose of these focus walks was to determine the level of standards-based instructional practices in classrooms across the district and to assist schools in identifying areas of strength as well as opportunities for growth. A focus walk was conducted at least once per year at each school. School administrators planned and conducted these focus walks collaboratively. Timely qualitative and quantitative feedback was provided to schools. As the system and its schools formally began the AdvancED internal review process, the ELEOT observation tool was incorporated into the focus walk process and has now become the primary observation format. The system noted that this tool improved the efficiency of this process. It provided an opportunity for the system to shift the observable evidence of (7) classroom environments from the teacher to student-focused. Data from the focus walks is used measure teacher effectiveness, adjust learning approaches, plan professional learning, and allocate resources based on individual, school and district analysis. Based on the data collected from the focus walks conducted using the ELEOT differentiated learning backgrounds/culture/difference and digital learning environment are areas of focus.

Areas for growth-

The current RCPS infrastructure (e.g., bandwidth, servers, lack of cloud-based technology, few digital resources, etc.) is impeding efforts to maximize and expand technology integration.

The changing role of the teacher is critical to achieving the authentic, student-centered approach required for personalized learning. As the system transitions to providing personalized learning experiences to students, it also recognizes that personalized learning experiences must be provided to instructors and leaders. This will support the professional growth of teachers and leaders as they become skilled in their role as facilitators and collaborators to effectively differentiate instruction for all students. It is not just a matter of educating teachers and leaders about the new standards and frameworks, but actually providing enough professional learning to see real change of practice in the classroom.

Plans for Improving Areas for Growth:

As the system will continue to expand the school choice options, centralized registration must be streamlined to ensure the school choice system is implemented fairly and equitably. Furthermore, the changing role of the teacher is critical to achieving the authentic, differentiated student-centered approach required for personalized learning. Teachers will be provided with on-going and sustainable professional development to acquire the skills to fully implement a differentiated personalized learning experiences for students.

Additionally, teachers, administrators, as well as other support staff will be provided with professional development, models, and peer support for changing their role as educators and how they interact with students. This will require not only new training, but also a new design for ongoing teacher collaboration, professional development and support. The goal will be to provide on-demand, push-in support to schools related to the implementation of personalized learning environments, instructional strategies which consider backgrounds and cultural difference while considering teachers' needs to improve the transferring of professional learning into the classroom. Furthermore, teacher-leadership in specific content areas is crucial for providing real-time, job-embedded support to teachers. This is why our strategic plan calls for content coaches in all schools.

In addition, the technology department has developed a plan to improve infrastructure and technology integration. To ensure that technology is used proficiently to create student-centered digital learning experiences, RCPS currently employs one Technology Integration and Teacher Effectiveness Specialist (TITES). The system will expand the number of personnel with technology expertise to function as the primary function of the TITES will be to develop, facilitate, and guide professional learning designed to improve teacher effectiveness as related to the TAPS, instructional technology, and continuous improvement. Highly proficient with the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS), the TITES will model the effective use of technology integration strategies into curriculum, instruction and assessment practices across all content areas. The system also plans to increase the number of Instructional Technology Data Specialist (ITDS) as well.

Sustainability

The voter approved ESPLOST will enable the system to deliver innovative public education to the community in a radically transformed manner, centered on a personalized learning experience for all students. The system intends to expand upon our existing online coursework through infrastructures such as Rockdale Virtual Campus and incorporate the integration and utilization of digital learning resources in all K-12 classrooms. The system's goals for this include the following: expand the existing Rockdale Virtual Campus course catalog to include options for staff professional development; develop an online "Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM)" Support Network; provide the training/support needed for creating and maintaining web-based instructional learning objects for classroom use; create virtual professional learning communities and content support groups within Rockdale Virtual Campus; provide listserv opportunities for a variety of areas such as CCGPS, RT3, pedagogy, content-specific news, funding opportunities, customer service, emergency procedures, parent involvement, service learning, etc.; and create a blog area for professional learning staff to share observations, "hot" topics, new resources, recognitions and awards, etc.

Institutionalized and Research-based Interventions

RCPS recognized the importance of offering balanced academic, social and behavioral support. RCPS Cycle for Results allows for intervention and enrichment opportunities to be adjusted based on students' needs. This comprehensive model is needed at the district level to ensure that the cycle framework is institutionalized and research-based interventions are provided for all students. To support this process, schools are allocated safety net funds to provide needed interventions and support programs for students. In addition, enrichment camps are offered to elementary and middle school high achiever students during the fall, winter, and spring breaks. The successes of these programs are evaluated yearly.

The Office of Support Services provides services that assist students with their behavioral and social/emotional needs through individual and/or group sessions. These services are designed to help students achieve success in school. The Prevention & Intervention program is designed to equip students with behavior management strategies that address a variety of concerns by enhancing problem-solving abilities, teaching decision-making skills, learning how to manage conflict/change, and/or developing a positive self-concept. The mentoring program provides mentoring relationship with students to assist developing and achieving goals that will help them to be successful in school. The Advocacy Summit is training that assists students in becoming advocates for community change. Too Good for Drugs (TGFD) is a school-based prevention program that reduces risk factors and enhances protective factors related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use. Seven Challenges is another program that provides short-term drug treatment program students to parents. Additionally, RCPS offers a district-wide Parent Academy twice a year in early fall and early spring. RCPS staff, along with local business and community leaders, offers informative sessions on a variety of topics, including positive discipline, resume writing, financial planning, and health life styles. Most schools offer similar parent classes throughout the year. To build students' capacity to improve their future, RCPS implemented a school advisement program, PREPARE (Preparation for Real-Life Experiences and Post-Secondary Opportunities through Advisement, Relationships, and Education), at the high school level during the 2012-2013 school year, and a similar middle school advisory program that same school year. Advisement creates the conditions for improving student achievement and behavior and enriches the lives of students and teachers through personalization of the learning experience. Approximately 75% of parents who participated in the survey revealed that their student had at least one adult advocate in the school.

The current state code gives the district the autonomy to create its own attendance zones and, in fact, RCPS is transforming into a boundary-free school system so that students can attend specialty schools and programs. Successful conditions for implementing the RCPS Choices for Personalized Learning model are aligned with initiatives already underway in our system: Rockdale Career Academy - a local charter school for CTAE, opened in 2006 and expanded in 2012; C. J. Hicks Elementary School is an International Baccalaureate candidate school; D.L. Sims Elementary School is the first AVID elementary school in the state of Georgia; and all three traditional high schools house a Microsoft Information Technology Academy. The K-12 STEM pipeline has been created via the following choice options: Rockdale Magnet

School for Science and Technology, opened in 2000-2001 school year and is the first high school in Georgia to obtain full STEM certification; Memorial Middle School, awarded a Georgia RT3 Innovation Fund grant to establish the Rockdale 21st Century Academy of Environmental Studies along with partners Georgia Tech, AVID, Snapping Shoals EMC, and the Department of Energy in Washington D.C.; and Honey Creek Elementary School, a STEM focus school and is actively seeking Georgia STEM certification.

In addition, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, tutors, behavior specialists, and interpreters provide assistance to staff and students so that students with disabilities and English learners are able to remain in the least restrictive environment as much as possible. An Adapted PE teacher provides direct instruction to students and consultation to staff so that students with disabilities can access the curriculum during physical education. Students with disabilities and English learners are included in district-wide programs offered to all students such as the Magnet Program, Program Challenge, Open Campus, and Rockdale Career Academy, where they continue to receive consultative or direct services in accordance with their IEP or eligible services through ESOL.

RCPS has a rapid communication system for parents and employees. In a matter of minutes, phone, text and email messages can be sent to all parents and employees in the district, school communities, or just specified groups. This system works with our student information system and is a key communication tool for emergencies, announcements, and daily attendance calls. While this is a fabulous communication tool, we know that it can be so much more. Our goal is to be able to push communication to students and parents in a format they choose to receive it. We want to make it simple for teachers to send classroom messages and simple for parents to receive it through smartphone and tablet apps, text or email. Currently, parents can view grades and assignments through our parent portal. We must have a seamless transfer of data between our student information system and rapid communication system so students and parents can receive communication about student behavior, grades, assignments, announcements and emergencies.

Area of Growth:

The RCPS strategic plan calls for increased parent and student exposure to post-secondary and career opportunities. RCPS has a career center established at each high school; however, lack of funding allows for only minimal resources. Currently each career center houses a few computers and free resources that are obtained through various postsecondary institutions or organizations. It is imperative that each career/parent resource center is equipped with materials for post-secondary and career research and application.

Plans for Improving Areas for Growth:

The systems' goal is to "teach" students appropriate behaviors and responses to potential triggers for negative behaviors. To accomplish this type of instruction, our P&I Specialists implement several evidence-based programs as part of a student's individual action plan. To expand this level of service, the STARS Project proposes to contract with a mental health provider to allow for licensed therapists to continue providing therapeutic services and to hire additional prevention and intervention staff. During the 2012-2013 school years, 109 students were referred to school-based mental health services.

Poor academic performance is an indicator that academic support is needed. It may also indicate that behavioral support is needed. Using the Response-To-Intervention (RTI) model, a team reviews the student's needs to identify root causes for the poor performance. When behavior is an indicator, the academic team work will work with support services staff to include social/emotional and behavioral supports along with academic safety nets. Likewise in the advisement process, students learn strategies and skills that will benefit them in school, college, and careers. For example, incorporated into the middle school advisement curriculum are lessons that address bullying, service to others, and organizational skills. To allow students opportunities to build character and give back to the community, students are encouraged to participate in various community service activities.

Sustainability:

RCPS outlined through its strategic plan high-quality strategies and action steps for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. This plan includes an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable them to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements as well as accelerate their learning through support of individual needs. RCPS is building a system that will help students envision their post-secondary futures, set appropriate learning goals, and track and manage their own progress, with input from teachers and parents. The system has incorporated personalized learning plans and multiple opportunities for students to work at their own pace, seeking extra help or acceleration as needed. Accommodations and high-quality strategies are in place for high-need students through differentiated and individualized learning activities and opportunities. The system recognizes the importance of allowing students to build core skills and competencies by pursuing academic topics of high interest; as well as the central importance of 21st century skills as equally valuable to college/career readiness as academic content mastery. Formative and summative assessments balance standardized testing with multiple ways to demonstrate mastery; technology investments allow our system to extend learning far beyond the traditional school day; and the expectation for college and/or career is set from the first day of kindergarten.

Resources and Support Systems

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

Overall Rating: 3.25

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	Policies, processes, and procedures ensure that system and school leaders have access to, hire, place, and retain qualified professional support staff. System and school leaders systematically determine the number of personnel necessary to fill all the roles and responsibilities necessary to support purposes, educational programs, and continuous improvement throughout the district. Sustained fiscal resources are available to fund positions critical to achieve the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Assessments of staffing needs •RCPS Strategic Plan and Quarterly Update •School financial guidelines •New Vision Leadership Development 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are focused on supporting the purpose and direction of the system, its schools, educational programs, and system operations. Instructional time is protected in policy and practice. System and school leaders work to secure material and fiscal resources to meet the needs of all students and improve the effectiveness of the system. System and school leaders demonstrate that instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are allocated so that all students have equitable opportunities to attain challenging learning expectations. Efforts toward the continuous improvement of instruction and operations include achieving the purpose and direction of the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Examples of school schedules •Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources •Examples of school calendars •Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction •District strategic plan showing resources support for district •ITDS Training Schedule •Professional Learning Institute Registration Instructions •Professional Learning Policy •Cycle for Results •RCPS Mission and Beliefs •School specialty information •Project list with estimated costs 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	System and school leaders have adopted or created clear expectations for maintaining safety, cleanliness, and a healthy environment, and have shared these definitions and expectations with stakeholders. System and school personnel as well as students are accountable for maintaining these expectations. Measures are in place that allow for continuous tracking of these conditions. Improvement plans are developed and implemented by appropriate personnel as necessary to improve these conditions. Results of improvement efforts are evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments •Example systems for school maintenance requests •Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements •School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes •School safety assessment template Local facilities plan Administrative bulletins Emergency preparedness plan ESPLOST fact sheet Evacuation checklist Fire department pre-plan report Fire escape plan Fire safety check Kitchen health inspection Playground check Project list with estimated cost PSE Emergency Quick Reference Guide School Safety Assessment Work orders: asbestos and dish machine 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	The system has clearly defined policies and procedures for strategic resource management. The system employs a systematic, long-range, strategic planning process in the areas of budget, facilities, and other strategic system components. The strategic planning process is regularly evaluated for effectiveness, and improvement plans related to the process are developed and implemented when necessary. All strategic plans are implemented with fidelity by the governing body, and system leaders and have built-in measures used to monitor and ensure successful implementation and completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems •Local facilities plan (2012-2017) Resolution for new five year local facilities plan Strategic plan outline ESPLOST Project list with estimated costs 	Level 4

Accreditation Report

Rockdale County Schools

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to ensure that all students, school, and system personnel have access to the media and information resources necessary to achieve the educational programs of the system and its schools. The system implements and evaluates processes to ensure qualified personnel are recruited, hired, and retained in sufficient numbers to assist students, school and system personnel in learning about the tools and locations for finding and retrieving information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data on media and information resources available to students and staff •AT&T WAN Wavelength 2012-2013 Media Center Stats •ESPLOST IV Facts & Information •Media Server PO •MMS Latitude 10 STEM PO •My Big Campus PO •Open Campus Focus Walk 11-12-13 •Project List with Estimated Costs •Tech Inventory 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	The system provides a modern, fully functional technology infrastructure, modern, updated equipment, and a qualified technical support staff to meet the teaching, learning, and operational needs of all stakeholders throughout the system. System and school personnel collect data concerning needs and use the resulting data to develop and implement a technology plan to continuously improve technology services, infrastructure, and equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model •Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level •District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level •Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness •2011-2014 Technology Plan •AT&T WAN Wavelength •E&A Internet •ESPLOST •Media Server PO •MMS Latitude 10 STEM PO •Project list with estimated cost •RCPS BYOT Student Guidelines •Technology inventory 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the physical, social, and emotional needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of each student in the system. Valid and reliable measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly and comprehensively evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed, implemented, and evaluated to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Student assessment system for identifying student needs •Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support •Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills •Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education •List of support services available to students •Intro to Advisement and Get to Know You Lesson plan template HS Advisement Curriculum Map MS Advisement Curriculum Map IST email with RTI Parent Academy Fact Sheet RCPS STARS MOA Community and support services portal page Family engagement portal page RCPS counseling program portal page School social workers portal page Student advisement and prepared program curriculum SREB Advisement Best Practices 504 Power Point GA Scholarship Inf. GA College 411 RTI & SPED process SSW Annual Report 	Level 4

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	The system has designed and implemented a process to determine the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of these students. Measures of program effectiveness are in place, and system and school personnel use the data from these measures to regularly evaluate all programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are designed and implemented to more effectively meet the needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning •Survey results •Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning •Description of referral process •RTI Process and forms Intro to Advise & Get to Know You Lesson plan template MS & HS Advisement Curriculum Maps Portal pages: Community and support services, family engagement, RCPS counseling, school social workers, student advisement and prepare program curriculum SREB advisement and best practices Counseling referral: CJH & DMS Elementary career guidance GA Student Health Survey PSY: Consent, Referral, Parent Questionnaire SSW: Referral & Roles Budget Suicide protocol 504 Eligibility 	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Areas of Strength

Rockdale County Public Schools (RCPS) has a record of providing resources and services in all schools that support the system purpose and direction to produce successful students. Our mission and vision drive the decision making behind each initiative and help inform practices among all support systems. To sustain resources and services for all students, the system has established policies, processes and procedures across all support systems to ensure consistency in practice.

The Human Resources Department (HR) serves as a catalyst for recruiting, employing, and retaining an adequate number of qualified professional and support staff. A system strength is applying defined policies, processes, and procedures that allow for consistent hiring practice and retention of employees. To ensure equity in staffing across schools, allocations are calculated annually and applied to projected student enrollment at school sites. School leaders submit their proposed staffing plan to the Assistant Superintendent who presents the plans to the Board of Education for approval. Upon approval, building leadership has the autonomy to use the points system to determine their staffing plan to fill vacant positions, as well as fill any newly allocated positions. When hiring, principals consider teaching positions and

certification carefully to ensure that 99+ percent highly-qualified status is maintained in the system. Teach Georgia is used to identify potential certified candidates and Employee Self-Service (ESS) is used to identify potential classified candidates. ESS is a component of Municipal Information Systems (Munis) which has been implemented as a financial and HR/payroll software. Munis has provided significant savings in cost and work hours while increasing efficiency since the rollout in 2009. Overall, Munis has freed employees to focus on meeting their educational goals instead of processing paper forms. The system's new hire orientation allows for the new employee to become familiar with employee policies, benefits and payroll procedures. On the AdvancED survey, approximately 87% of staff strongly agreed or agreed to "our school provides qualified staff members to support student learning" while approximately 80% of parents strongly agreed or agreed to the same statement.

As a Race to the Top district (RT3), RCPS is continuing pilot implementation of Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) to improve and assess teacher and leader effectiveness with the goal of increasing student achievement. Both TKES and LKES provide ongoing feedback and a deliberate practice component designed to allow teachers and leaders to grow in their own practice, resulting in incremental gains in student learning. These evaluation systems incorporate multiple measures of performance, including student growth percentiles.

A minimum of four informal and two formal observations are completed on each teacher annually. Using a performance appraisal rubric, credentialed administrators assess teachers by conducting observations, including walkthroughs and thorough documentation of a teacher's practice. Additionally, at the beginning of the year, RCPS teachers complete a self-assessment on the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS). This self-assessment is reviewed collaboratively by the teacher and administrator to establish three growth plan SMART goals and complete professional learning planning. Two of the goals are aligned to identified standards of focus; the other goal is student performance-based. The goal setting process was institutionalized for RCPS in 2009. As a component of each teacher's summative evaluation, students complete an online survey of instructional practices developed by the Georgia Department of Education. The survey of instructional practices is used by the school administrator to inform the final rating for the corresponding TAPS standards.

RCPS school principals and assistant principals are evaluated using LKES beginning with the 2012-2013 pilot implementation year. LKES is a common evaluation system that allows the state to ensure consistency and comparability across systems, based on a common definition of leader effectiveness. The LAPS component of LKES provides evaluators with a qualitative, rubrics-based evaluation method by which they can measure leader performance related to quality performance standards. LAPS offer a balance between structure and flexibility. It is prescriptive in that it defines common purposes and expectations, thereby guiding effective practice. At the same time, it provides flexibility by allowing for creativity and individual leader initiative. The overarching goal of LKES is to support the continuous growth and development of each leader by monitoring, analyzing, and applying pertinent data compiled within a system of meaningful feedback. Each leader develops SMART goals designed to foster growth in LAPS. As a component of each leader's summative evaluation, staff completes an online climate survey developed by the Georgia Department of Education. The results of the climate survey are used by the evaluator to inform the final rating for the corresponding LAPS standards.

Retention of qualified personnel and support staff is a high priority of RCPS. Several measures are put in place to ensure school leaders and system-level administrators have the tools necessary to retain qualified, effective personnel. Newly hired instructional personnel are assigned a mentor; along with the possibility of additional support from coaches, administration, and the Division of Teaching & Learning. The system conducts a New Teacher Orientation Program and Induction Principals Program. Professional learning is differentiated for all employees through a myriad of avenues to include digital and face-to-face models to target areas of need as identified through the evaluation process.

Since FY 2003, RCPS has experienced austerity reductions in funding provided by the state totaling \$64.2M. In FY 2014, our state revenue was reduced by \$10.2M in austerity reductions (\$10.2M is included in the \$64.2M). Reductions in funding have created a challenge to maintain the previous level of resources for the system. Some locally funded positions were reduced and restructured due to austerity cuts,

which were absorbed by natural attrition. In addition, the 2013-2014 calendar was modified to include a reduction of ten instructional days. RCPS employs a full-time grant writer to continuously seek funding opportunities to support priorities and practices. The recently voter approved E-Splost will enable the system to purchase technologies and implement other facility enhancements, permitting the reallocation of local funds.

Through the use and guidance of the strategic plan, RCPS maximizes its use of time, materials, and financial resources to support educational programs across the system. Each school utilizes the system's strategic plan to guide their work in developing school improvement goals, safety nets and professional learning, which in turn guides long-range planning. These plans and goals direct the schools in preparing the students to increase academic achievement. Individual schools evaluate their master schedules to maximize instructional support in identified areas for growth.

In order to provide appropriate educational opportunities for all students, RCPS utilizes various instructional programs through specialty schools such as Alpha Academy, Open Campus, the Rockdale Magnet School for Science and Technology, Rockdale Career Academy, and Rockdale Virtual Campus. During the 2013-2014 school year, several choice schools were opened at the elementary and middle school levels. Individual schools have chosen specific pathways such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM); Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID); and International Baccalaureate School (IB). This demonstrates the system's commitment to site-based management and shared decision-making.

School and system budgets are allocated on a per student basis ensuring that resources are distributed equitably across schools. Additional resources funded by Title I & III grants and IDEA funds provide access to materials with the purpose of meeting the needs of diverse learners while ensuring equal access. School-based Title I budgets also give school leaders the flexibility in spending funds to address the unique needs of their students. Additional funds have also been secured through the previously received federal Race to the Top Grant. Funds from this source have provided professional learning, instructional materials and technology (SchoolNet-Tetradata) to support the increase of effective instructional practices.

RCPS maximizes efforts to maintain facilities, services and equipment needed for a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff. The system outsources its janitorial services to GCA Services Group (GCA) in order to save money. Each month, the company provides a GCA Report Card for Custodial Services for each building leader and staff to complete, rating their satisfaction of services provided. The RCPS Chief Operations Officer meets with the GCA team quarterly to discuss the service and quality of work provided. The system and schools have safety and maintenance plans which are evaluated on an on-going basis by system-level directors and the Division of Operational Services. Through the use of SchoolDude, procedures are in place to ensure facility maintenance is ongoing and completed in a timely manner. Additionally, the Health Department conducts scheduled and random inspections of food service facilities. The Local Facilities Plan for 2012-2017 is based on population trends, curriculum and space needs, grade distributions, and facility needs.

RCPS and school leaders create clear expectations for maintaining a safe learning environment. Safety is a strength of our system. Surveillance and security systems are prevalent throughout facilities and monitored at local and system levels. Each facility's safety committee submits a safety plan to the Division of Support Services. Constant reevaluations and assessments are used to improve practices. Part of each school's safety plan is the use of the Emergency Preparedness Plan Ready Reference Chart for specific roles within a school building when an emergency occurs. Monthly fire drills are conducted in each building and data are entered into the state Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner's system. Each school participates in preventative and emergency drills to include lock down, evacuation, reverse evacuation, and severe weather. RCPS continues to be in compliance with state and local inspections. The Fire Marshall inspects facilities annually. In addition, the fire department visits schools during fire drills to familiarize themselves with procedures and to provide feedback as needed to improve the process. Emergency personnel have maps to identify building layout. Secondary schools have School Resource Officers (SRO) provided in conjunction with the Rockdale County Sherriff's Department and the Conyers Police

Department. SROs are available to elementary schools as needed. Periodic drug searches occur at secondary schools.

An area of strength for our system is the strategic planning process. The system strategic plan serves as the strategic and operational improvement plan for the school system. The system has clearly defined policies and procedures for strategic resource management via the RCPS strategic plan, policies, and administrative bulletins. Local site-based plans align with the system strategic plan and incorporate components of long-range planning process in the areas of professional learning, budget, technology, instruction, safety, support services, facilities, etc.

Strategic Plans are implemented with fidelity by the governing body and system leaders, and have built in measures to monitor implementation and completion. Cabinet members provide quarterly updates to the Board of Education on the progress of action plans.

To further support resource management strategies, an ongoing goal of the Board is to have a balanced budget each year. A "balanced budget" means that the anticipated expenditures do not exceed the anticipated revenues in the budget. To assist in maintaining a balanced budget, the Board commits to the principle of not adding expenditures or creating new positions that would result in an unbalanced budget. The Rockdale County Board of Education employs a budget and accounting system which conforms to the criteria established by the Georgia Board of Education. The budget of the Board is prepared under the leadership of the Superintendent and represents fiscal and educational soundness. This budget is based on the local ability and desire to support the school system and on other sources of support such as state aid, financial aid, grants, gifts, and bequests. In addition, on an annual basis, the Superintendent prepares a tentative proposed budget for the consideration of the Rockdale County Board of Education. The proposed budget includes statements of cash and credit on hand, outstanding liabilities, anticipated receipts, anticipated expenditures, reserves, tax levy needed to yield sufficient funds, and other information required. This proposed budget is balanced, except for borrowed funds in anticipation of tax revenues, if applicable. The county ensures that every effort is made to avoid any deficit spending and to have the budget prepared, advertised, and adopted prior to the deadline of the Georgia Department of Education. As a result of these practices, RCPS is a debt free entity.

RCPS provides, coordinates and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system. Prior to this school year, the system employed full-time Instructional Technology and Data Specialists (ITDS) and Instructional Technology Liaison (INTEL) at the school level. Each ITDS holds a teaching certificate while INTELS hold a para certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. ITDS and INTELS were evaluated by the school administration. Effective 2013-14, ITDS and INTELS are evaluated by the system's director of technology. ITDS and INTELS meet regularly for their own professional learning and to coordinate practices and resources to deliver the highest level of support possible. The system employs several other technology personnel: database specialist, system support specialists, help desk specialist, and a Microsoft Certified Network Engineer. Each of these employees has received proper training per their job descriptions and is evaluated by the system's director of technology.

The Division of Teaching and Learning provides content coordinators (ELA, Math, Science/Health & PE, Social Studies, and Fine Arts), math and science coaches, lead teacher for compliance, Quality Assurance/School Improvement Specialist, Career Technology Agriculture Education Coordinator and staff, Early Learning Coordinator and staff, and Technology Integration and Teacher Effectiveness Specialist.

The Division of Support Services provides social workers, school psychologists, STARS Project Manager and specialists, Prevention and Intervention Specialist, Athletic Coordinator/Trainer, and Behavior Intervention Specialist.

Technological resources are evaluated by the system receiving feedback from schools, surveys and the system-wide helpdesks. Technology is maintained primarily by the ITDS and INTEL at the school level, who has access to a knowledge base and credentialed repair system support specialists assigned to school clusters.

Each school employs a full time media specialist who is certified as such by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. The media specialist is evaluated by and reports to the school administration. Media specialists meet regularly for their own professional learning and to coordinate practices and resources to deliver the highest level of support possible.

All students and staff have access to a variety of educational curriculum and curricular resources delivered digitally. Hyperlinks to many digital resources are provided on school public sites.

RCPS provides a modern, technology infrastructure and technological equipment at all of its schools. The system's multiyear technology plan aligns with the system strategic plan. As elements of the strategic plan are updated and modified, the technology plan is also revised in order to support and align with the system vision. The system has increased bandwidth in the schools in order to provide a faster Internet connection for the students as evidenced in the July 2013 purchase order.

The system provides access to resources through the inclusion of a media center at each of the schools. The system has also piloted an iPad program, providing 10 iPads to each school. Surveys were provided to the teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the iPad pilot program. The system also is piloting a one-to-one device program at Memorial Middle School using the Dell 10 Latitude tablets for the STEM Program. The increase in bandwidth also supports the system's pilot Bring Your Own Technology initiative, in which students are encouraged to bring their own iPads and tablets to use in the classroom.

Most schools have access to laptop carts and all have computer labs. All classrooms in the system have an LCD projector. Elementary classrooms are equipped with Promethean Activboards and accessories while secondary classrooms utilize eInstruction's Classroom Performance System (CPS). RCPS has recently purchased and installed the Lightspeed Internet filtering system to increase our ability to ensure safe technology usage. Along with Lightspeed, the system received access to and will begin to roll-out My Big Campus, a Learning Management System to all staff and students K-12.

The system provides a shared platform for saving and sharing information through the utilization of shared drives and a Microsoft SharePoint Site. Furthermore, the system houses a public site to communicate with stakeholders. Through each of these platforms, teachers are able to share information, thereby collaborating more easily with their colleagues across the system.

The system provides a shared platform for saving and sharing information through the utilization of shared drives and the SharePoint portal. Through each of these platforms, teachers are able to share information and collaborate more easily with their colleagues across the system. The implementation of Infinite Campus, a student information system, allows teachers to record grades and provides a method for parents to access them. SchoolNet is a data-driven decision making, instructional management suite adopted by RCPS.

RCPS provides services that support the students' academic, physical, emotional, and sociological needs. Our system employs full-time professional school counselors, social workers, behavioral specialists, school psychologists, and a homeless liaison. The homeless liaison works to support the needs of identified students following the guidelines of the McKinney Vento Act. All schools have one or more counselors who work closely with the homeless liaison and social workers to ensure that students' needs are being met. Counselors within the system are trained to provide classroom guidance on a myriad of topics ranging from study skills to career exploration and awareness. In addition, counselors conduct individual and small group guidance sessions, assist with testing, and assist with other transition activities. Social workers coordinate community support such as the Department of Family and Children Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, and other service organizations to assist students in reaching their full academic potential and increase involvement in educational programs. Attendance is heavily monitored at the school and system level with support provided for those students with excessive absences.

School psychologists serve RCPS by helping students, parents, and personnel with developmental, learning, and behavioral concerns. They assist with the implementation of Response to Intervention Process (RTI) and 504 plans. Students receive additional learning support services through the tiered RTI process. The students with disabilities are served through various models depending upon their Individualized

Education Plan (IEP). Models for learning include READY, inclusion, collaboration, support, co-teaching, self-contained, and resource. RCPS employs lead teachers for compliance (LTC) and learning support coordinators who work collaboratively with the school-based team to ensure IDEA compliance. The Georgia Department of Education recently released that RCPS achieved 100% on all Compliance Indicators and District's Maintenance of Effort Status for the second consecutive year.

RCPS employs a mentor coordinator who has developed and implemented a mentoring program that supports identified students. Mentors include students, parents, staff, community members, business partners and other stakeholders. Schools have identified a parent liaison to assist parent and community volunteers.

To provide a well-balanced educational experience, students are offered the opportunities to participate in health and physical education, music, art, and foreign language during their K-12 studies. RCPS provides opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities based on their grade band and interest. On the AdvancED survey, approximately 79% of staff strongly agreed or agreed to "our school provides opportunities for students to participate in activities that interest them" while approximately 82% of parents strongly agreed or agreed to the same statement; approximately 68% of secondary students strongly agreed or agreed to the statement "in my school, I can participate in activities that interest me."

Areas for Growth

While RCPS implements a phase-in process for action plans, the system should be forward-thinking in the resources and supports necessary to carry out the innovations within the strategic plan, ahead of the implementation phase.

Sustainability

RCPS is committed to the strategic planning process as well as updating and fulfilling the technology plan. In order for the areas of resources and support systems to continue to make gains, evaluation of existing processes, policies, and procedures will continue to take place on an on-going basis.

Plans to Improve Areas of Need

RCPS has implemented a School Specialty Taskforce. The taskforce is comprised of representatives from all system departments. The taskforce oversees the acceptance of the specialty and coordination of resources and supports needed to implement the school specialty programs. Departments and schools are then able to research, plan, budget and implement steps prior to the availability of the specialty program.

Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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

Overall Rating: 3.0

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	System and school personnel maintain and use a comprehensive assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures. These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system (including non-instructional divisions) performance. The comprehensive assessment system ensures consistent measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions. Most assessments are proven reliable and bias free. The comprehensive assessment system is regularly evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols •Survey results •Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local or school assessments on student learning and school performance •Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free •Grading and report schedules SLO implementation plan assessment descriptions sample cabinet reports CRCT, GAA, SLO, ACCESS, Georgia Writing Assessment, GKIDS, & NRT test administrator training sessions sample QuART documents annual site-based coordinator training Georgia fitness assessment manual 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	Systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning from multiple data sources are documented and used consistently by professional and support staff throughout the district. Data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. System and school personnel use data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Written protocols and procedures for data collection and analysis •Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning •List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning •System quality control procedures Data analysis protocol template Tech Times School improvement goals RCPS intervention process PLC analyzing student work protocol RCPS Academic Report benchmark report sample school safety net plan, Title I plan, strategic plan training data analysis software program 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	All professional and support staff members are assessed and trained in a rigorous professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data •Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data •Policies and written procedures specific to data training •IST schedule sample QuART review sample district collaboratives sample Tech Times sample math collaboratives ITDS training schedule ITDS job description curriculum alignment training plan College and Career Ready Index performance briefing RCPS intervention process data analysis protocol data teams training agenda and sign-in sheets 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	Policies and procedures describe a process for analyzing data that determine verifiable improvement in student learning including readiness for and success at the next level. Results indicate improvement, and system and school personnel systematically use these results to design, implement, and evaluate the results of continuous improvement action plans related to student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Policies and procedures specific to data use and training •Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data •Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning •Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans •Evidence of student readiness for the next level •benchmarks district and site-based alignment rubric testing calendar data briefings College and Career Ready Performance Index briefing CCGPS implementation update RCPS Academic Report 	Level 3

Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	System and school leaders monitor comprehensive information about student learning, system and school effectiveness, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals. Leaders regularly communicate results using multiple delivery methods and to all stakeholder groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals •Communication plan regarding student learning, systems that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders •Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals •Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement •Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups •RCPS Academic Reports performance target reports parent brochures for standards-based grading parent information sessions benchmark summary analysis reports Tech Times standards-based assessment and reporting parent meetings Superintendent's Parent Academy agendas Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council Superintendent's Boundless Learning Opportunities 	Level 3

Reflect upon your responses to each of the indicators and performance levels by considering and responding to the following questions when drafting your narrative response. Use language from the performance level descriptions to guide your writing. Cite sources of evidence the External Review team members may be interested in reviewing.

Rockdale County Public Schools (RCPS) implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement. The Mission of the Rockdale County School System, the boundless learning community where students aspire to their dreams and success is expected of all, is to ensure that each student performs at his/her highest academic level and is a successful, participatory member of our global society through a system distinguished by (a) fearless advocates for students; (b) community alliance for students' success; (c) empowering students to shape their own future; (d) infinite learning opportunities for all; and (e) customized measures of individual success. In order to accomplish this mission, RCPS utilizes an evolving Strategic Plan as a blueprint for continuous improvement. This transformative strategic cycle is perpetuated by constant reflection on the following five questions:

1. Who are we?

2. Where are we now?
3. Where do we want to go?
4. How will we know when we have arrived?
5. How do we plan to get there?

Utilizing this process allowed for the creation of various strategic objectives and strategies. Strategy I states, "We will create a rigorous system of teaching and learning that empowers students to define and achieve their educational success". To ensure that RCPS effectively align and deliver curriculum, instruction, and assessment a process known as the Cycle for Results is utilized system-wide. This process allows teachers, administrators, and system personnel to develop clear understandings, as defined by the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) or the Georgia performance Standards (GPS), of what to teach, how to teach it, when to teach it, and how to determine if intervention or enrichment is needed. This continuous process uses a variance of data from school, system, state, and national assessments.

RCPS establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system. System and school personnel maintain and use a wide-ranging assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures. Data from the AdvancED system staff survey revealed 86.25% of system staff agree or strongly agree with the statement, "Our school uses multiple assessment measures to determine student learning and school performance". Prior to the onset of the school year, system personnel create system-wide testing calendars and grading and reporting schedules. Additionally, system personnel make elementary teacher scoring guides by grade, quarter, and subject readily accessible to stakeholders on the RCPS website. These standards-based assessment resources are one of the many guides used to support data produced from locally developed sources.

The comprehensive assessment system ensures consistent measurement across all state-tested courses, educational programs and system divisions. There are numerous systems of checks and balances within RCPS. To ensure consistency across schools, there are system-wide protocols and procedures for administering system, state, and national exams. Additionally, assessments are administered according to the publicized district testing calendar. Each school site has a minimum of one test coordinator who is trained on the policies and procedures necessary for system, state, and national test administrations. Additionally, this person is responsible for training school level personnel on the appropriate procedures based on the purpose, requirements, and type of assessment. Currently there are system testing protocols and/or training associated with the following measurement tools including, but not limited to: System Benchmarks, 4.5 School Level Common Testlets, Common Performance Tasks, Subject/Grade Content Portfolios, End of Course Tests, Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) Assessments, STAR Early Learning assessments, Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI), Write Score, Standard Learning Objective (SLO) assessments, Teacher Keys Effectiveness System student surveys, State Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS), Georgia Writing Tests, Georgia Graduation Tests, ACCESS for ELs, Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA), Georgia Fitness Assessment (Fitnessgram), ReadStep, PSAT, SAT, ACT, EXPLORE, PLAN, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), CTAE Pathways Assessments, IOWA Test of Basic Skills, and Cognitive Abilities Test.

The comprehensive assessment system is regularly and systematically evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning and the conditions that support learning. Due to the multiplicity and types of assessment measures, the evaluation process varies according to established test protocols. Each quarter the system provides schools with benchmark assessments. These formative assessments are created by a RCPS employed a full-time Assessment Development Specialist who utilizes state standards and formats for creating tests. Assessments are aligned to the curriculum by a standard matching process conducted in conjunction with administrators and curriculum coordinators as part of the Quality Assurance Review Team (QuART) and are weighted to content standards according to the state content weights. The assessments are checked for bias by the QuART team and are reviewed by the assessment development specialist. Prior to distribution and administration, assessments are reviewed through a formal process known as Quality Assurance Review Team (QuART). This systematic method examines assessments for accuracy, relevance, appropriate rigor, and alignment. Once

assessments are administered, school personnel may provide commentary by submitting the Benchmark Feedback Form.

There are additional state and national assessments utilized within RCPS. Prior to administering these assessments, school test coordinators are involved in system training sessions. During these sessions questions are raised, protocols for effective student testing conditions are established, and materials are thoroughly explained. Throughout test administration, school test coordinators remain in constant contact with the system test coordinator to ensure consistent and valid practices are being implored.

Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation and organizational conditions that support learning. Systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing and applying learning from multiple data sources are documented and used consistently by professional and support staff throughout RCPS through "The Cycle for Results" process. This expectation is reflected by the 86.36% of system and staff who agree or strongly agree with the AdvancEd system staff survey statement "Our school has a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and using data. With a system-wide understanding of the importance of constant reflection in order to maximize student learning and system effectiveness, attention is focused on both fiscal and human resources to ensure the system as a whole is continually improving.

RCPS data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs and the conditions that support learning. Testing data is utilized as a tool to gear instruction and allocate resources within the county. As a result, data has to be readily accessible and transparently shared in order to continually gauge and modify the teaching and learning process. To ensure data can be accessed through multiple programs, data is input utilizing system created student numbers. RCPS has allocated resources toward software that makes data analysis seamless. Currently the following software programs are in use within the district: Infinite Campus, State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), Tetra Data System, SchoolNet, FTE Tracker, Pulse, and TieNet. These various systems allow data from multiple measures to be analyzed in numerous formats including trend, comparison, longitudinal, historical, and organizational.

System and school personnel use data to design, implement and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs and the conditions that support learning. Through a multi-tiered approach, RCPS faculty and staff use data to support changes in styles, methods, and conditions needed for continual student growth. By adherence to the RCPS Intervention Process and Data Analysis Process school and system personnel can utilize data to accomplish various goals aimed at continuous improvement. At the school level, data is used to determine individual and overall student progression toward learning goals. Based on results, students become eligible for various programs aimed at intervention or enrichment. These programs include Early Intervention Program (EIP), Program Challenge Gifted Program, Rockdale Magnet School, Special Education, Honors/Accelerated Programs, and a host of school based safety net programs. This information becomes the basis for School Improvement Goals (SIG), Safety Net Plans, Title I Plans, and Site-Based Strategic Plans which are evaluated regularly for program effectiveness and designing methods for improvement. At the system level, this data is used in the creation of content specific academic reports. These reports use a combination of historical, comparison, and trend data to identify specific needs at system and school levels. Additional support and resources are allocated to individual schools as evidenced by data results.

Throughout RCPS professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data. All professional and support members are assessed and trained in a professional development program related to the job specific evaluation, interpretation and use of data. As a 21st century school system, training involves a combination of technology, pedagogy, and procedural formats. Throughout the system there are Instructional Technology and Data Specialist (ITDS) who facilitate the training of professional and support staff on technology tools geared at acquiring, interpreting, and utilizing data. These personnel utilize a district created ITDS Training schedule in addition to requests from serviced schools to design and deliver quality training sessions. Personnel wanting additional training can choose to partake in various training sessions advertised in the RCPS Tech Times. The Division of Teaching and Learning utilizes district collaborative sessions to

reinforce and further discuss ways to interpret and use grade/content specific data. The Office of Professional Learning also offers a variety of data training sessions throughout the school year. Information on sessions is publicized on the system website, through RCPS emails, and through RCPS PL District Day Program Guides. Additional training is provided to school and system administrators through meetings such as IST meetings, Principal Meetings, AP Meeting. Once training has occurred, school administrators are expected to facilitate the redelivery at individual school sites. This redelivery is supported by county purchased assessment books, professional learning coaching sessions, and access to aforementioned web-based data software.

To ensure readiness for and success at the next level, RCPS uses systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying data from all data sources. Data is consistently shared with staff. Teachers collaboratively evaluate data through the processes of the Cycle for Results. At specified and strategic times throughout the school year, principals meet with cabinet members to share a thorough analysis of individual school wide data with a comparative focus on system standards with focus on progress and challenges. In addition to the use of data as a vehicle for instruction, all school personnel must evaluate school-wide improvement plans to guide the growth process of student learning as it pertains to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards or Georgia Performance Standards.

According to AdvancED Survey data from various RCPS stakeholder groups, there is strong belief that students are being prepared for readiness and success at the next level. According to the system staff survey, 82.16% of staff agree or strongly agree schools use data to monitor readiness and success at the next level. This sentiment is echoed by 79.99% of parents who agree or strongly agree their child is prepared for success in the next school year. An examination of elementary, middle, and high school survey results found an average of 81.21% of students felt their school prepares them for success in the next school year.

RCPS system and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders. According to data collected from Advanc-Ed system staff survey, 86.47% of personnel agree or strongly agree that leaders monitor data related to student achievement and school continuous improvement goals. System administrators consistently meet with school administrators in a variety of sessions aimed at student achievement, and system improvements. Sessions include administrator meetings with curriculum coordinators, data briefings with members of cabinet, Instructional Support Team (IST) system professional learning sessions, and a host of professional learning collaboratives. RCPS has also chosen common formats for reporting progress to stakeholders. At the elementary, middle, and high school level student progress is reported using system designed standards based report cards. Between reporting cycles, student progress is evaluated using system created teacher scoring guides.

Leaders regularly communicate results using multiple delivery methods to stakeholder groups. After quarterly benchmarks the Division of Teaching and Learning generates academic reports that are shared at all system and school levels. Parents are provided with individual student performance data through benchmark letters. During RCPS Board of Education meetings cabinet members regularly give status report updates. The Superintendent regularly conducts community sessions through avenues such as Parent Academy, Parent Advisory Council, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Teacher Think Tank, and student advisory groups. In addition, the Superintendent communicates through a monthly video connection to all RCPS employees.

Areas for Growth

Although data collected from multiple sources is used as indicators to determine the status of student learning and system effectiveness. RCPS recognizes that the focus is primarily on state tested courses. To ensure a comprehensive assessment system focused on continuous improvement, the system will expand accountability measures for non-tested subjects to refine and improve levels of teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Sustainability

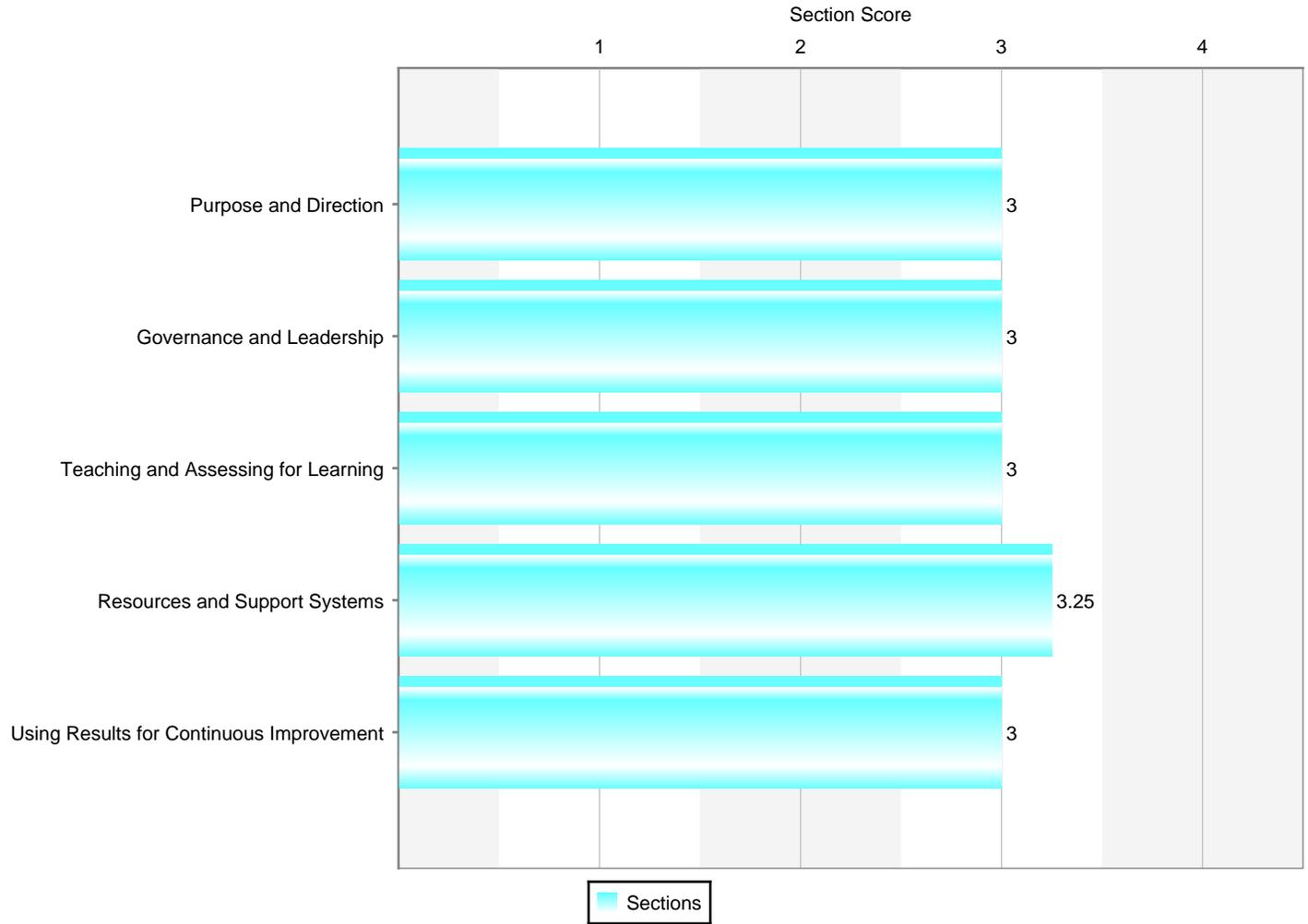
RCPS is committed to the strategic planning process. As this is an ever-evolving, fluid process, it continuously forces the system to examine where we are and seek innovative ways to move beyond the status quo. With continued focus on strategic planning and The Cycle for Results, RCPS stakeholders will continue to benefit from a system that changes according to the needs of the populous.

Plans for Improving Areas for Growth

The Georgia Department of Education approved Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to assist systems in utilizing system-identified achievement growth measures in non-tested courses. This will be a required component of the teacher evaluation program (Teacher Keys Effectiveness System) beginning 2014-2015. As a Race to the Top district, RCPS is currently participating in the pilot implementation of SLOs and has developed a comprehensive plan. This plan has guided the development of the assessments, the setting of the growth percentiles, and the administration of the pre and post assessments. The baseline data allows teachers to plan for student success by ensuring that instruction is moving students, teachers, and schools toward the common vision of exemplary instruction and high levels of student academic growth.

Report Summary

Scores By Section



Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

Introduction

The Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic is designed to analyze the institution's survey results in terms of areas of achievement and areas that need improvement. Further, the diagnostic is essential to the accreditation and continuous improvement processes in that it provides the institution with a comprehensive view of the aggregate scores of the surveys administered, and the actual total of respondents for each survey type to derive a single score for this diagnostic. The performance level score computed at the completion of the diagnostic is used to broaden and enhance the external review team's understanding of the stakeholder's perceptions of the institution; the diagnostic should be used in the same manner by the institution as it engages in improvement planning.

Stakeholder Feedback Data

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
1.	Did you complete the Stakeholder Feedback Data document offline and upload below?	Yes		RCPS Stakeholder Feedback Data Document

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 4.0

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
1.	Questionnaire Administration	All required AdvancED questionnaires were used by the institution to receive stakeholder feedback. The minimum response rate for each population was met (parent questionnaire: equal to or greater than 20%, student questionnaire(s): equal to or greater than 40%, staff questionnaire: equal to or greater than 60%). Questionnaires were administered with complete fidelity to the appropriate administrative procedures. In every instance, the stakeholders to whom these questionnaires were administered fully represented the populations served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations were provided as necessary for all participants.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
2.	Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	Two or more of the stakeholder questionnaires had average item values of 4.30 or higher (on a 5.0 scale). All questionnaires had an average item value of 3.20 or above (on a 5.0 scale). Results of stakeholder feedback collected by the institution were well analyzed and clearly presented.	Level 4

Areas of Notable Achievement

Which area(s) indicate the overall highest level of satisfaction or approval?

Stakeholders indicated our strength to be in standard 1, with all average score summaries being above a 4.0 for parents, staff, early elementary and elementary. The average score for secondary students was 3.61. In response to, "our school's purpose statement is clearly focused on student success," 90% of our staff strongly agreed or agreed while 82.88% of our parents strongly agreed or agreed.

Stakeholders indicate 4.1 to be a strength, the system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools and educational programs. Parents rate this indicator with an average score of 4.05 while staff rated this indicator with a score of 4.15; students did not rate this indicator. Approximately 80% of parents strongly agreed or agreed that "our school provides qualified staff members to support student learning."

All stakeholders indicated 5.4, "the school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level", as a strength. Parents scored this indicator at a 4.06; staff 4.08; elementary students 4.88; and secondary students 3.78. In response to "my child is prepared for success in the next school year", 79.99% strongly agreed or agreed.

Which area(s) show a trend toward increasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval?

The 2013 AdvancED Stakeholder Surveys were only administered one time. Therefore, we can not accurately determine any trends using this perception data. We have previously administered internal and external surveys for the purposes of strategic planning, teacher and leader evaluation, and program evaluation.

Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other stakeholder feedback sources?

On the 2012-2013 Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI) taken by teachers, the average response value for "all professional staff members in my school are held to high standards to increase student learning" was a 4.4 out of 5.0. In response to "my school's learning communities are structured for teachers to engage in the continuous improvement cycle (i.e., data analysis, planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation)", the average response value was a 4.2. The average response value for "practicing and applying new skills with students in my classroom are regarded as important learning experiences in my school" was 4.4.

Results from the 2013 Georgia Student Health Survey, revealed that 87% of 6-12 grade respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed to the statement, "I feel successful at school". Eighty percent also strongly agreed/somewhat agreed to the statement, "I feel my school has high standards for achievement".

Areas in Need of Improvement

Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest level of satisfaction or approval?

While considered satisfactory, when compared to other indicators, our stakeholders indicated indicator 3.8 (the system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress) to be an area we can strengthen. Parents scored this indicator with a 3.81; staff 3.72; early elementary students 4.07; elementary students 3.87; secondary students 3.51. Approximately 54% of secondary students responded with strongly agree or agree to "my school offers opportunities for my families to become involved in my activities and my learning." Approximately 68% of staff responded strongly agree or agree to "in our school, all school personnel regularly engage families in their children's learning progress."

Which area(s) show a trend toward decreasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval?

The 2013 AdvancED Stakeholder Surveys were only administered one time. Therefore, we can not accurately determine any trends using this perception data. We have previously administered internal and external surveys for strategic planning purposes, teacher and leader evaluation, and program evaluation.

What are the implications for these stakeholder perceptions?

The rating for this area indicates that stakeholders may not be fully aware of the myriad of family engagement opportunities offered at the school and system levels. While RCPS have many avenues of communication and have solicited stakeholder feedback through Title I surveys, Parent Academy Surveys, and school climate surveys, the system will continue to explore new methods of communicating and engaging families.

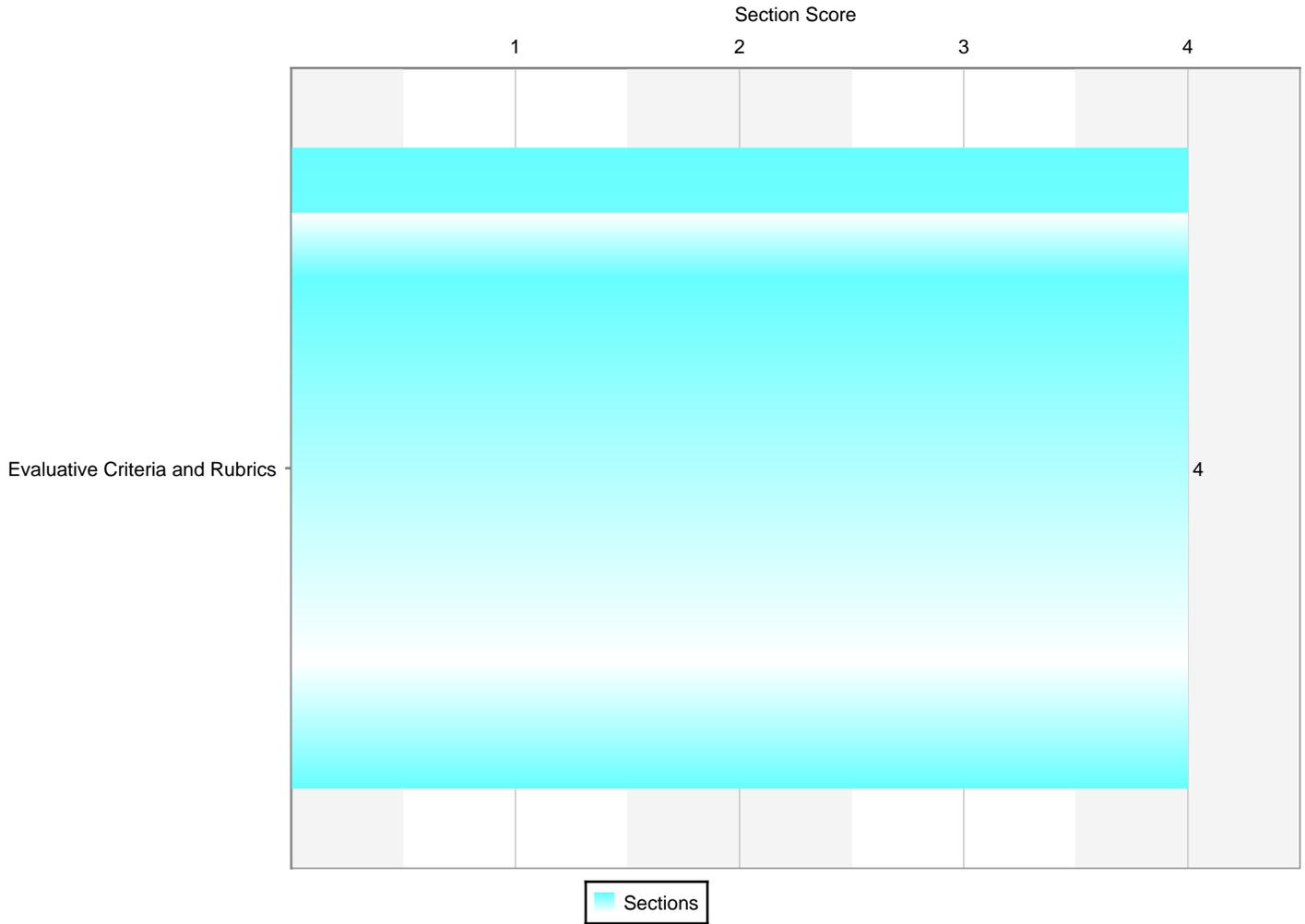
Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other stakeholder feedback sources?

Results from our recent 2013 RCPS Parent Academy indicate high levels of satisfaction from those parents who attended. One hundred percent of respondents rated their overall satisfaction of the academy with a four (21%) or a five (79%) on a five-point Likert Scale. Of those attendees who used free childcare services, 100% responded their child enjoyed his or her stay.

Because schools administer individual Title I surveys, district-wide data is unavailable. However each school sought parent input on ways that the school could provide parents with the supports and resources needed to garner student success. Such input includes parent workshop topics, parent resource center materials, times most convenient for meeting, and the identification of barriers that limits their participation.

Report Summary

Scores By Section



Student Performance Diagnostic

Introduction

The Student Performance Diagnostic provides an institution with a process to report summative student assessments. This diagnostic is significant to the accreditation and continuous improvement process as it serves as a resource for schools to view content area assessment results required by the state, district, or other entities, determine the quality and reliability of the given assessments, and show the alignment of the assessments to the school's curriculum. The performance level computed at the completion of the diagnostic is used by the external review team as a comprehensive report to understand fully the institution's assessment program; the diagnostic should be used in the same manner by the institution as it engages in improvement planning.

Student Performance Data

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
1.	Did you complete the Student Performance Data document offline and upload below?	Yes		System Student Performance Data Document

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.75

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
1.	Assessment Quality	The array of assessment devices used by the institution to determine students' performances is sufficiently aligned so that valid inferences can be reached regarding students' status with respect to the entire set of curricular aims regarded as high-priority, "must accomplish," instructional targets. The documentation provided in support of this alignment is persuasive. All of the assessments used are accompanied by evidence demonstrating that they satisfy accepted technical requirements such as validity, reliability, absence of bias, and instructional sensitivity.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
2.	Test Administration	All the assessments used by the institution to determine students' performances, whether externally acquired or internally developed, have been administered with complete fidelity to the administrative procedures appropriate for each assessment. In every instance, the students to whom these assessments were administered are accurately representative of the students served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations have been provided for all assessments so that valid inferences can be made about all students' status with respect to all of the institution's targeted curricular outcomes.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
3.	Quality of Learning	Evidence of student learning promoted by the institution is well analyzed and clearly presented. In comparison to institutions functioning in a similar educational context, students' status, improvement, and/or growth evidence indicates that the level of student learning is substantially greater than what would otherwise be expected.	Level 4

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
4.	Equity of Learning	Evidence of student learning indicates achievement gaps exist among subpopulations of students, and these achievement gaps have noticeably declined.	Level 3

Areas of Notable Achievement

Which area(s) are above the expected levels of performance?

Elementary reading is above expected levels of performance using a performance base line of 90%. Elementary ELA for Grade 3 is at 90% and Grades 4 and 5 are above 90%. Grade 5 math is above 90%. Middle school is above expected levels in reading and ELA at all three grade levels. Grades 7 is above in math. High school American Literature is at expected levels of performance. Grade 11 writing is above expected levels of performance.

Describe the area(s) that show a positive trend in performance.

While not quite to expected levels of performance, elementary and middle school science and social studies have shown steady increases in performance over the past 5 years. For math, a steady increase is evident for elementary and middle school grade levels that were not quite at expected levels. Students with Disabilities (SWD) shows a positive increase in performance at the elementary level in reading, ELA, and math. SWD also show a positive increase in performance at the middle school level in reading and ELA. EOCT scores show a positive trend across the board except for Math I which has been phased out. Math I scores should not be considered for this report. The Grade 5 writing test indicates a positive improvement in performance until 2013 where the trend takes a little drop. The state and RESA also show the same drop in 2013. This could be related to the change from GPS to the Common Core. The Grade 8 writing test indicates a positive improvement in performance over the years. All students, as well as subgroups, performed above those same groups of students statewide. Grade 11 graduation writing test shows a positive trend in performance until 2012 when all students statewide exhibited a drop. 2013 scores for all students showed a gain in performance back to or above previous levels.

Which area(s) indicate the overall highest performance?

Reading and ELA show the overall highest performance for all students, including subgroups, in elementary school. Reading and ELA also show the overall highest performance for all students, except for ELs, in middle school. Asian students in the middle school not only show steadily increasing performance in math, they are also the overall highest performing subgroup. Grade 11 High School Graduation Writing Assessment is an area of highest performance.

Which subgroup(s) show a trend toward increasing performance?

For elementary school math, all subgroups show increasing performance, with the most improvement being the Hispanic and multi subgroups. SWD and EL students show an increasing performance at the elementary level in reading, ELA, and math. For middle school, all subgroups show increasing performance in math. Most SWD show an increasing performance at the middle school level in reading, ELA, and math while EL shows an increasing performance at middle school in reading and ELA. For Race/Ethnicity high school subgroups, most all are showing significant gains in performance in all content areas. The high school SWD and EL populations show the biggest gaps in performance from the other subgroups in most of the content areas. Grade 8 Writing shows an increasing performance for SWD and EL subgroups. All subgroups show an increasing performance trend for the Grade 11 High School Graduation Writing Assessment.

Between which subgroups is the achievement gap closing?

Looking at the race/ethnicity subgroups, there has been a noticeable close in the achievement gaps for all content areas. At the elementary and middle school levels, SWD students show a closing gap. Our Hispanic students show good gains in math at both the elementary and middle school levels. There is still work to be done for SWD and EL students at both the elementary and middle school levels in science and social studies. For high school, achievement gaps are narrowing in American Literature and Biology. The Achievement gap shows closing signs for all subgroups for the grade 11 Graduation Writing Assessment.

Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other data sources?

The above reported findings are consistent with benchmark assessments for all students and with the ACCESS testing for ELL students.

Areas in Need of Improvement

Which area(s) are below the expected levels of performance?

Grade 3 ELA, Grades 3, 4, and 5 math, science, and social studies, 6th grade math, and 6th, 7th, and 8th grade science and social studies. HS 9 Literature, Math II, Coordinate Algebra, Biology, Physical Science, US History, and Economics. Grade 5 writing is also below expected levels of performance. SAT and ACT are below expected levels of performance.

Describe the area(s) that show a negative trend in performance.

Elementary school reading for all ethnic groups except multi shows a negative trend in reading, even though they are still above 90% all together. All elementary ethnic groups show a negative trend in ELA, again all are above 90%. There is a negative trend in middle school reading for EL students. A negative trend exists in middle school ELA for Hispanic, Multi, Black, and white students as well as EL students. SWD students show a negative trend in middle school science and both EL and SWD students show a negative trend in middle school social studies. HS Biology is also showing a negative trend. Coordinate Algebra is a target performance area for RCPS, however, because of the state's transition to the CCGPS we do not have trend data for this content area.

Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest performance?

Science and Social Studies for all students. Coordinate Algebra for all students. Grade 5 writing.

Which subgroup(s) show a trend toward decreasing performance?

EL for middle school reading. All subgroups showed decreasing performance in HS Biology. Students noted as Multi ethnicity showed a decrease in performance on the 9th Grade Literature EOCT.

Between which subgroups is the achievement gap becoming greater?

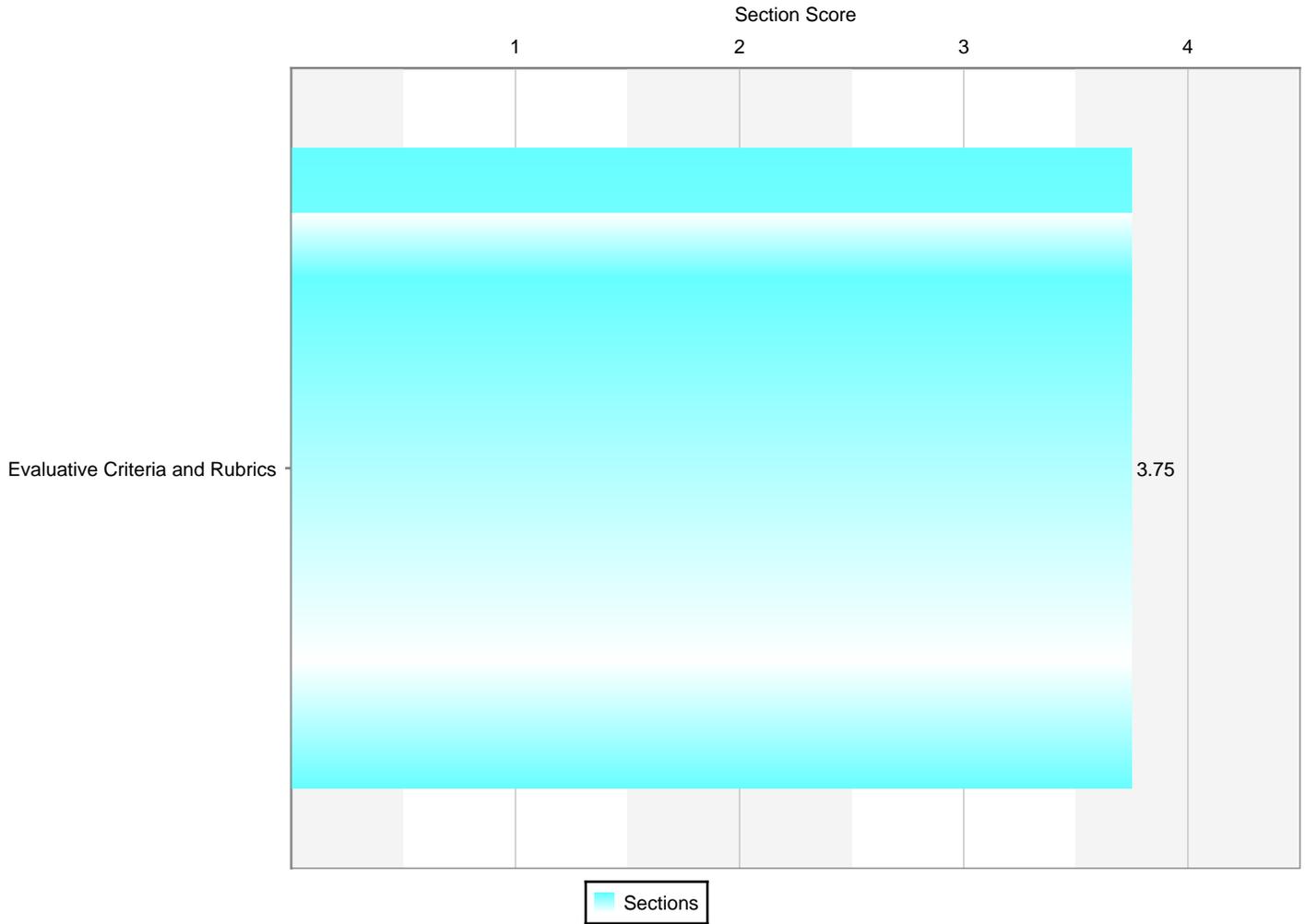
The gap is increasing in elementary school science between SWD and all students and in middle school math, science, and social studies for the SWD and EL students vs all students. Big gaps still exist in high school between the SWD and EL students vs all students on the EOCTs.

Which of the above reported findings are consistent with findings from other data sources?

The above reported findings are consistent with benchmark assessments.

Report Summary

Scores By Section



AdvancED Assurances

Introduction

AdvancED Policies and Procedures outline certain requirements that all institutions must meet in order to be in compliance. Institutions are required to verify whether or not they meet these requirements by answering a series of questions and in some cases, attaching evidence for review.

By responding to the questions in ASSIST and attaching evidence when required, the institution has verified whether it meets or does not meet each of the Assurances for Accreditation.

AdvancED Assurances

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
1.	The institution has read, understands, and complies with the AdvancED Policies and Procedures.	Yes		

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
2.	The institution has reported all substantive changes in the institution that affect the scope and/or have an impact on the institution's ability to meet the AdvancED standards and policies. Such changes include, but are not limited to: - Restructuring (merging, opening, or closing) of the institution or institution(s) within its jurisdiction - Mission and purpose of the institution - Governance structure of the institution, including changing to a charter school/school system, being the subject of a state takeover, or a change in ownership - Grade levels served by the institution - Staffing, including administrative and other non-teaching professionals personnel - Available facilities, including upkeep and maintenance - Level of funding - School day or school year - Establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus - Student population that causes program or staffing modification(s) - Available programs, including fine arts, practical arts and student activities	Yes		

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
3.	The institution implements a written security and crisis management plan which includes emergency evacuation procedures and appropriate training for stakeholders. Attach the security and crisis management plan. (optional)	Yes		RCPS Emergency Preparedness Plan 2013-2014

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
4.	The institution monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system.	Yes		

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
5.	The institution engages in a continuous improvement process and implements an improvement plan. Attach the improvement plan if the plan is not located in AdvancED's Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST).	Yes		RCPS Strategic Plan Renewal Phase

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
6.	The system verifies that all institutions within its jurisdiction meet the AdvancED Standards for Schools. Attach a description of the quality assurance process used to monitor the institutions.	Yes		RCPS Quality Assurance Process