Accreditation Report

Towns County School System

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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?

Towns County Schools is a small rural school system with a strong Appalachian heritage serving approximately 1050 students. The county seat, Hiawassee is surrounded by the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Brasstown Bald, the highest point in Georgia at 4,784 feet above sea level, is located in Towns County. The county is also home to Lake Chatuge, a Tennessee Valley Authority lake. The mountains and lake have influenced the past and the present of both the community and the school. For many years the mountains isolated the area from the rest of the state giving rise to a unique mountain culture which includes a strong work ethic and a pride in independence. This isolation also meant that cultural diversity has been slow in coming to the county and the school system. Students of Towns County are predominately Caucasian with only a few of other ethnicities represented.

Towns County is home to Young Harris College. Students and teachers benefit from the district's strong partnership with Young Harris College. Having the college within our county provides many educational opportunities. Young Harris College students are involved with our school through volunteer opportunities such as the student mentor program. Our students have the opportunity to dual enroll and take college courses while still in high school.   The close proximity to the college lends itself to many prospective teachers completing their field experience in our schools. Some members of the Towns County Schools administration team serve on the Transforming Educator Preparation Action Committee as a partnership with the education department of Young Harris College. This provides our system with the opportunity to have a voice in the preparation of potential educator candidates for the future.

 Due to the inaccessibility of the area, there is little manufacturing in Towns County and as a result somewhat limited job opportunities. The mountains that have prevented factories in the area have created tourism and established the area as a major retirement community. The population for Towns County in 2012 was 10,495 that was a 12% population increase from the year 2000. The population under 18 was 14.9% and population 65 and older was 30.7%.   In 2003 the median family income in Towns County was $37,295 and in 2012 the median family income was $35,843.00. The state of Georgia median family income for 2012 was $47,895.00. Greater than 50% of the students in the Towns County School System qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Despite the economic decline of the area the high value of mountain and lake property causes the state of Georgia to consider Towns County as one of the richest counties in the state. This in turn has decreased the amount of state funding the system receives to help with the budget. Over the past few years the system has had to tighten the budget and reduce the calendar by eight days. Slowly days have been added back to the calendar. Since 2013 two student days were added back each year returning the number of student days to the expected 180 days. Teachers are still working on a two day reduced calendar.   Often it seems that the system has been asked to do more with less. For example, Georgia is currently transitioning to an online testing system. This change has resulted in great cost to the system not only to fund additional computers but to enhance the bandwidth to support large numbers of simultaneous users within each building.   In an effort to balance the budget the Towns County Board of Education found it necessary in the fall of 2014 to raise the millage rate by 1.5 mills. This increase was presented to the community and discussed in various public forum sessions. After much discussion the millage rate was increased in hopes that the increased revenue will help to support the monetary needs of the system.

While the economy has declined over the past few years the overall success of our students has not. Towns County Schools has much to be proud of. Towns County Schools had the ninth highest College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) score in the state in

2014. Towns County High School earned the highest score in our RESA. Both Towns County Elementary and Towns County Middle Schools scored the second highest score in our RESA. Our students and teachers rise to the challenge of achieving the standard set forth by the state and many times go beyond the standard. While this is something to be proud of we choose to continue looking toward future improvement by taking advantage of our small system location. Having all three schools on one campus allows us to facilitate our System Leadership Team. This team is comprised of representatives from all three schools in each subject area. These team members meet to analyze district data and share input from their prospective schools. The System Leadership Team also leads a vertical planning session with all teachers in the system divided into subject groups. Our goal is to communicate across grade levels to provide the best educational experience for our students system wide.

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.

Towns County Schools Vision:

Towns County Schools shall provide an exceptional education for all students in a safe, caring environment that develops lifelong learners who become responsible, independent thinkers, and productive citizens.

Towns County Schools Mission:

The mission of Towns County Schools is that all students will achieve at their highest potential.

Towns County Schools Beliefs:

o Students require a safe environment in which to learn.

o Students learn best when provided challenging, rigorous educational opportunities utilizing current best practices

o Extra-curricular activities are important for the development of well-rounded students

o Effective teaching strategies guide students to actively engage in problem solving and higher order thinking skills that energize and maximize learning for all students.

o The educational process involves shared responsibilities, communication, and collaboration among home, school, and community.

In addition to the vision, mission, and beliefs established for the school system we have also established a professional learning goal statement. Towns County Schools has chosen to provide our educational team with academically focused and professional learning opportunities that facilitate positive and measurable outcomes that help the educational team achieve their highest potential. Our professional learning motto is Try Collaborate Succeed.

Towns County Schools provides opportunities for students to achieve their potential through support services such as the student mentor program and the 21st Century Afterschool program. Intervention times are established at the school level to provide opportunities for students to receive additional assistance as needed. Acceleration opportunities are available through the Gifted Program and through advanced courses in all schools. The acceleration program in the middle school allows student the opportunity to earn high school credit in the eighth grade. Honors classes are offered in the high school, and dual enrollment courses allows students to begin college while in high school.   A variety of career pathways provide opportunities for students to learn job skills that will help them in the future.

Towns County Schools utilizes Title II Part A funds to provide quality professional learning opportunities for our staff. The addition of the Edivate online platform by School Improvement Network provides our staff with individualized opportunities for professional learning and group collaboration.

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.

Within the last three years, Towns County students have shown progress and achievement through standardized test scores and the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). Our rankings in the Pioneer RESA show that we are performing well in comparison to districts around us.   Additionally, we have experienced positive results in the number of students exceeding the standards in many subjects. Our system CCRPI was the ninth highest district score in the state of Georgia. This score measures many aspects of school achievement ranging from student achievement to school climate.

Looking forward to the next three years, Towns County Schools will strive to show improvement in

- Improving student performance in math

- increase instructional levels and student performance in writing at all grade levels

- closing the achievement gap for all subgroups in all academic areas

Additional Information

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

Additional Information:

Towns County Schools has applied to become a Strategic Waiver School System/IE2 District. The Georgia Department of Education website provides the following explanation of what this status means.

"An SWSS/IE2 System is a local school district that operates under the terms of an SWSS/IE2 contract between the State Board of Education and the local Board of Education. The system receives flexibility in the form of waivers of certain state laws, rules and guidelines in exchange for greater accountability for increased student performance.

SWSS/IE2 contracts are intended to provide local school districts with the flexibility they need to increase student achievement. This district flexibility option was created by House Bill 1209, which provided for "Increased Flexibility for Local School Systems" when it was passed in 2008. School districts that choose this option are known as IE2, or Investing in Educational Excellence, Systems. Please note that House Bill 502 goes into effect on July 1, 2015, districts that chose the IE2 flexibility option will henceforth be known as Strategic Waivers School Systems (SWSS/IE2)."

The Towns County Board of Education chose this flexibility option because it best fits the needs of our district. We strive to provide educational excellence but often require some flexibility given our small size and state funding. Our hope is that the Strategic Waivers School System/IE2 status will provide us with the flexibility to manage our daily operations in a manner that best benefits the school district and the students served.

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.	•Survey results •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness	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.	•Survey results •Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement •Examples of written stakeholder communications or marketing materials that portray the school purpose and direction	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.	•Survey results •Statements or documents about ethical and professional practices •Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs •Statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning •The district strategic plan	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.	•Examples of schools continuous improvement plans •Survey results •Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs •Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings •The district strategic 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.

The Towns County School System maintains and communicates a purpose and direction for continuous improvement at both the district level and at each individual school. Faculty and staff in each school agree with the system's mission statement in that it is the mission of Towns County Schools to have all students achieve at their highest potential. The district vision is that Towns County Schools shall provide an exceptional education for all students in a safe, caring environment that developments lifelong learners who become responsible individuals, independent thinkers, and productive citizens. The mission is ready daily by students over the loud speaker during announcements. The mission statement is on school letterhead as well as the school website. Student, parent, and faculty/staff handbooks contain this information. Schools place this information on programs for parent events such as Towns County Elementary School's end of year Honor's Day program. Each classroom has a framed version of the school's vision, mission, and beliefs.

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.	•Professional development plans •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •Staff handbooks •Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions •School handbooks	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.	•Governing authority minutes relating to training •Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest •Proof of legal counsel •Assurances, certifications •Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest •Governing code of ethics	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.	•Examples of school improvement plans •Roles and responsibilities of school leadership •Roles and responsibilities of district leadership •Survey results regarding functions of the governing authority and operations of the district •Agendas and minutes of meetings	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.	•Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan •Professional development offerings and plans •Examples of collaboration and shared leadership •Survey results •Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs •Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction	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.	•Minutes from meetings with stakeholders •Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys •Survey responses •Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan •Communication plan •Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan	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.	•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation •Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation •Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice throughout the system and student success noted •Representative supervision and evaluation reports	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.

Yearly the system revisits the mission, belief, and vision statements for discussion in an effort to maintain focus for the system's goals. Policies, practices, and procedures are developed to support the purpose and direction of the system. Policies are in place for fiscal management, professional learning, personnel matters, and other necessary areas for the efficient management of the school system. An area of strength for Towns County Schools is the System Leadership Team. This team provides opportunities for vertical discussions across the system at least twice each year. The team meets to discuss relevant issues, data, and make suggestions for improvement. At least once each year the designated leaders of the System Leadership Team with members from each school represented meet to discuss state test data and analyze notes and information provided from their meetings throughout the year in order to adjust the system improvement plan for the system. This plan is then presented to the Towns County Board of Education and administration from each school. Involving teachers in the decision making for the improvement plan is a positive aspect of our leadership style in Towns County that we would like to continue to foster and improve upon for increased stakeholder involvement.

Towns County Schools had survey results that indicated an overall satisfaction in the area of governance and leadership. One area in which we would like to improve is the communication of roles of leaders in the system. Some comments indicated that some stakeholders are unsure of the roles or duties of some leaders. Providing communication in regards to these roles could help stakeholders to have a better understanding of the system governance and leadership.

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: 2.75

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.	•Course, program, or school schedules •Survey results •Lesson plans •Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices •Posted learning objectives •State standards for courses	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.	•Curriculum guides •Common assessments •Surveys results •Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices •Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps •Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum	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.	•Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation •Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource •Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool •Surveys results •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 •Edivate-Online Individualized Professional Learning Software with opportunities for group collaboration	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.	•Curriculum maps •Documentation of collection of lesson plans, grade books, or other data record systems •Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions •Surveys results •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	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.	Some system staff participate in collaborative learning communities that meet both informally and formally. Collaboration occasionally occurs across grade levels, content areas, and other system divisions. Staff members promote 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 sometimes occur among system personnel. System personnel express belief in the value of collaborative learning communities.	•Common language, protocols and reporting tools •Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees •Survey results •Professional development funding to promote professional learning communities •Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning	Level 2

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.	•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Survey results •Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning	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.	•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 •Edivate Group for new employees	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.	•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Survey results •List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days •Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process •Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning	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.	Most school personnel participate in a structure designed by the system that gives them interaction with individual students, allowing them to build relationships over time with the student. Most students participate in the structure. The structure allows the school employee to gain insight into the student's needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.	•Curriculum and activities of structures for adults advocating on behalf of students •Survey results •Master schedule with time for formalized structure •Adopt an Indian Program Information	Level 2

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.	Most teachers across the system use common grading and reporting policies, processes, and procedures based on criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. These policies, processes, and procedures are implemented in most or all schools across grade levels and courses. Most stakeholders are aware of the policies, processes, and procedures. The policies, processes, and procedures may or may not be evaluated.	•Survey results •Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting •Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs •Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting	Level 2

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.	•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	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.	•Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services •Survey results •List of learning support services and student population served by such services •Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning •Data used to identify unique learning needs of students	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.

Towns County Schools strives to provide the best education possible for the students of Towns County. Towns County Schools has chosen to provide our educational team with academically focused and professional learning opportunities that facilitate positive and measurable outcomes that help the educational team achieve their highest potential. The Towns County School System is committed to improving student achievement by implementing and supporting research-based practices in professional learning. We as a system are working toward improvement by increasing opportunities of collaboration through vertical team meetings with our system leadership team as leaders of the discussions. Mentor programs have been developed to support teachers new to the profession and new to the system.

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: 3.0

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.	•Survey results •School budgets or financial plans for last three years •Assessments of staffing needs •Documentation of highly qualified staff •Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools	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.	•Examples of school schedules •Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources •Survey results •Examples of school calendars •Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction	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.	•Example systems for school maintenance requests •Survey results •Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements •Example maintenance schedules for schools	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 policies and procedures for strategic resource management. The system employs a long-range strategic planning process in the areas of budget, facilities, and other strategic system components. The strategic planning process is evaluated for effectiveness, and improvement plans related to the process are developed and implemented when necessary. Strategic plans are implemented with fidelity by the governing body, and system leaders and have built-in measures used to monitor implementation and completion.	•District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems •Survey results •Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments	Level 3

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.	•Survey results •Data on media and information resources available to students and staff •Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information	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.	•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 •Survey results •District technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure for the district-level and school-level	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 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.	•Student assessment system for identifying student needs •Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support •Survey results •Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills •List of support services available to students	Level 3

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.	•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 IEP process •Description of referral process	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.

Towns County Schools have policies, processes, and procedures the system to hire, place, and retain qualified professional support staff. There has been little turnover at Towns County Elementary School with most turnover resulting from staff moving out of the area. There has been almost no turnover at Towns County Middle School. The staff of this award winning school has been stable for years. With three principals in four years, there has been substantial turnover at Towns County High School. With a principal in place new to the position but not new to the system or community, stability will return to the position. An excellent job has been done of hiring staff for openings at the high school over the summer. With support systems in place, there should be little future turnover. Through the use of local, state, and federal funds, staff is adequate to achieve the purpose and direction of the system, schools, and programs.

Overall instructional time is protected in practice. Due to the isolation of the school district, there are times when student athletes at the middle school and high school are released during the school day to travel to away athletic events. Through proper scheduling, this disruption may be minimalized. Material and fiscal resources are adequate at this time to support academic programs.

Safety of students, families, faculty and staff is a priority for Towns County Schools. While there has been recent turnover, the custodial and maintenance staff of Towns County Schools is dedicated to keeping our schools safe and well maintained. An Emergency Operations Plan has been developed with input from staff and community. This plan has been distributed to all staff members and is available online. The district is in the process of gaining approval for the Emergency Operations Plan from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA). A system School Resource Officer is on site to ensure safety for our students, faculty and staff. The school system campuses, including the inside of the buildings, are equipped with surveillance cameras. The camera system is in need of being updated in order to monitor continuously. Towns County Schools are equipped with automatic lock doors that require a key code to be used upon entry. With the exception of the main entry doors, access is limited to those with keys or keycards.   Sign-in is required with reason for visitation and name tags worn when in the building in all schools. Administration is visual in the building monitoring and maintaining limited interruptions to instruction and ensuring a clean, healthy and safe learning environment.

Teaching faculty complete annual training on Mandated Reported Compliance, Code of Ethics, Blood borne Pathogens, Ethical Use of Social Media and Sexual Misconduct each year through an online platform. All schools participate in emergency drills each month; covering fire, severe weather, earthquake, evacuation and lock down procedures.

Towns County School facilities range in construction year from 1977 for the Middle/High School Facility to 2003 for the Elementary School. While the facilities have been well maintained over the years, there are areas of concern that will require a considerable outlay of capital. For example the roof of the Middle/High School is in need of replacement at this time. Towns County Schools has a long range five year facilities plan that will be updated in 2016and presented to the state BOE do take effect in Spring 2017. Towns County Schools work closely with the Georgia Department of Education on updating the system capital outlay plan.

Towns County Schools provide a modern fully functional technology infrastructure. The district employs qualified technical staff who work diligently to maintain technology services for the district. Towns County Elementary and Middle School have school wide Title I Programs. Title I funds have been used to supply a large number of mobile labs utilizing Google Chromebooks to be used by staff members to supplement instruction. Additionally funds have been used to provide academic core content classrooms with SmartBoards at the Elementary School and are slated to be installed in core content academic classrooms at the Middle School

Towns County Schools provide support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served through our partnership with family Connections, 21st Century Afterschool Program, and the mentor-mentee program. Towns County Elementary School provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning needs of all students through a full time counselor. Towns County Middle School and High School provide these services through the use of a shared counselor who works with all students grades 6 - 12.   Towns County Schools works to identify students who are experiencing homelessness or are from a Migrant family. Further support for students is provided as need by the Special Education Department.

Surveys of students, staff and parents support the consensus rating of 3 for Standard 4. It is interesting to note indicator 4.3 received the lowest rating from both high school and middle school students while receiving the highest rating from parents and staff.   It is speculated that our students have had less exposure to other facilities than have our parents and staff to make a judgment on indicator 4.3.

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.	•Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model •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	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.	•List of data sources related to district effectiveness •Survey results •Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning	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.	•Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data •Documentation of attendance and training related to data use •Survey results •Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data	Level 3

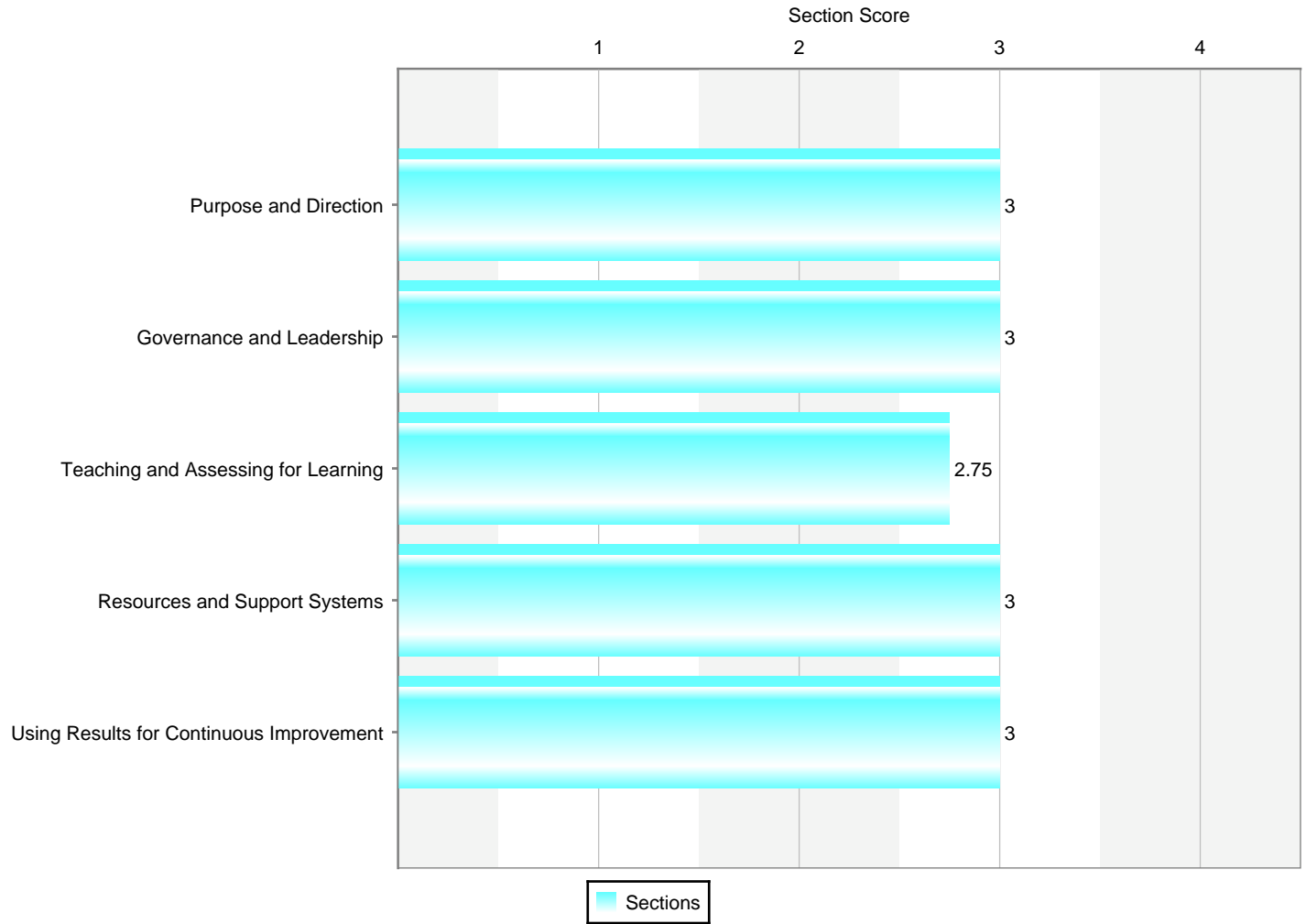| Indicator	Statement or Question	Response	Evidence	Rating
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	Policies and procedures describe a process for analyzing data that determine 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.	•Student surveys •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 growth	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.	•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	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.

As a system Towns County Schools analyzes achievement data from state assessments and discusses these findings in vertical team meetings in an effort to find trends and potential areas of needed change. The System Leadership Team presents findings to the Towns County Board of Education in a regular board meeting session. The system uses a variety of other products and assessments to inform instruction throughout the year. Students in grades K-8 are assessed by the Scholastic Reading Inventory and Math Inventory to obtain a Lexile measure for reading instructional levels and a quantile measure for Algebra readiness indicators. The IKAN assessment is given to provide additional information in math understanding prior to entering high school. Data is used to guide daily instruction, RTI placement and interventions needed to support learners. We are working toward utilizing data more effectively through collaboration and professional learning opportunities to increase the potential for data usage.

Report Summary

Scores By Section

Section Score

	1	2	3	4

Purpose and Direction — 3

Governance and Leadership — 3

Teaching and Assessing for Learning — 2.75

Resources and Support Systems — 3

Using Results for Continuous Improvement — 3

Sections

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		TOWNS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK DOCUMENT Combined Surveys from Schools with Weighted Averages to Represent District Results

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.0

	Statement or Question	**Response**	**Rating**
1.	Questionnaire Administration	Most 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 reasonable fidelity to the administrative procedures appropriate for each assessment. In most instances, the stakeholders to whom these questionnaires were administered mostly represented the populations served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations were provided for most participants.	Level 3

	Statement or Question	**Response**	**Rating**
2.	Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	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 acceptably analyzed and presented with reasonable clarity.	Level 3

Areas of Notable Achievement

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

Standard 1: 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.

Survey participants scored standard 1, Purpose and Direction, as the highest overall average score for Towns County Schools. The highest rated indicator within standard 1 is 1.1; the system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.   Indicator 1.1 scored a rating of 4.18. This rating support the system's efforts to review the mission, belief, and vision statements yearly in vertical team and system leadership teams. These statements of purpose and direction are then presented to the administration and Towns County Board of Education for approval. This is a cyclical process that repeats yearly.

The lowest rated standard within standard 1 is 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. Indicator 1.2 received a rating of 3.65. After reviewing this indicator and survey results we as a district feel this is an acceptable rating but will continue to monitor this at the school level.

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

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems shows a trend toward increasing stakeholder satisfaction or approval. Standard 4 had the second highest rating of 4.1. Indicator ratings ranged from 3.92-4.27 for standard 4 indicators. The highest rated indicator with a rating of 4.27 is indicator 4.4; the system demonstrates a strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system. Indicator 4.5 had the second highest rating within this standard with a 4.18 rating. Overall stakeholders are satisfied with the resources and support systems provided by the system.

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

The positive opinions of standard 1 and standard 4 can be recognized in other survey results. The annual needs assessment surveys for federal programs support these findings.

Areas in Need of Improvement

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

Standard 5: 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.

Survey participants scored standard 5, Using Results for Continuous Improvement, as the lowest overall average score for Towns County Schools. The district has reviewed the survey results for further information. The lowest rating indicator in standard 5 was 5.1. The system established and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system. This indicator was scored at 3.72.   We feel that this score is acceptable but are looking further into the area of assessment to determine if there are areas that need to be more clearly defined or maintained. The state assessment is in transition currently. Last year was the first year of the Georgia Milestones testing system. This new system as with any change provided some fear of the unknown. The state results from last school year are still not available therefore our state scores and data analysis are based on the prior year. As we transitioned to the new testing system we provided information to parents, students, and staff to ease into the transition. It is possible that further information may be necessary to improve in this area.

We also looked at the highest rated indicator in standard 5. Indicator 5.4 had a rating of 4.2; the system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.   As a system we meet in vertical teams and work with a system leadership team to analyze data focusing on trends in an effort to continually improve student achievement. This information is communicated to other stakeholders through the yearly public presentation at a board of education. We feel that this is an area of strength related to standard 5 and will continue to work to improve upon the efforts of the system leadership team process.

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

All standard averages were 4.03 or above. Considering these scores we as a district looked to indicators for areas of lower ratings to determine a trend toward decreasing stakeholder satisfaction.   The lowest rating indicator was 5.1; the system established and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system. This indicator was scored at 3.72.   We feel that this score is acceptable but are looking further into the area of assessment to determine if there are areas that need to be more clearly defined or maintained. The state assessment is in transition currently. Last year was the first year of the Georgia Milestones testing system. This new system as with any change provided some fear of the unknown. The state results from last school year are still not available therefore our state scores and data analysis are based on the prior year. As we transitioned to the new testing system we provided information to parents, students, and staff to ease into the transition. It is possible that further information may be necessary to improve in this area.

The second lowest rating indicator was 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. This indicator has an acceptable rating but as a district we will be looking at our parent involvement opportunities for improvement. Currently the district has planned staff development in the area of parent involvement and communication to better prepare teachers in each school to promote effective parent involvement. This training is scheduled for October 8, 2015 and will be facilitated by representatives from Pioneer RESA.

**What are the implications for these stakeholder perceptions?**

The perceptions of the stakeholders, if handled appropriately, can have positive implications for Towns County Schools. We as a district understand the idea that "perception is reality." As a district we need to create multiple communication and training opportunities to ensure shared understanding is developed for all stakeholders.

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

Looking at other surveys and needs assessments some consistency is present. All stakeholder feedback sources are considered when creating action plans for future improvement.

Report Summary

Scores By Section

Section Score

	1	2	3	4

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics — 3

Sections
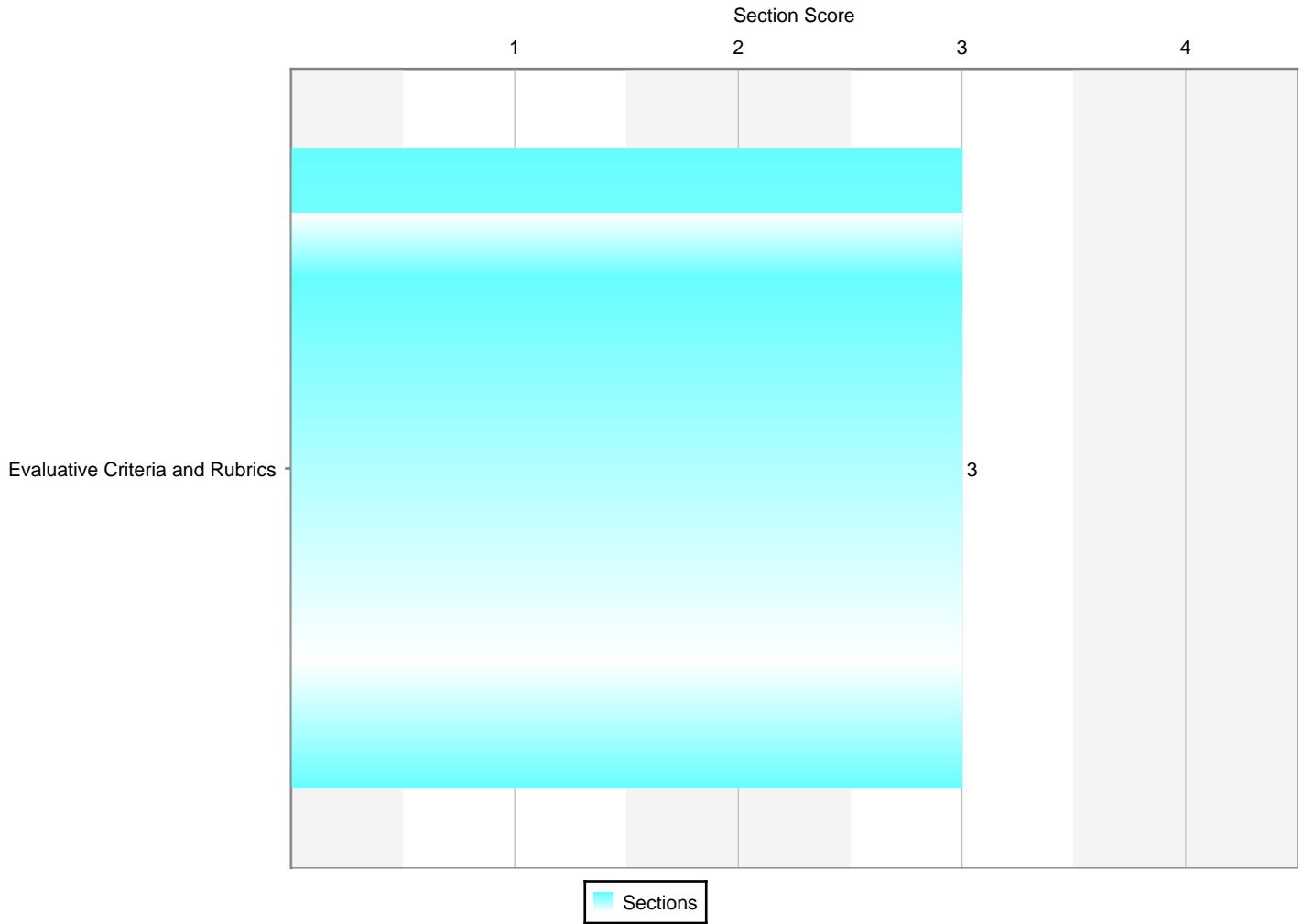
Student Performance Diagnostic

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		Towns County School System Student Performance Data Document

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.0

	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 majority of those curricular aims regarded as high-priority instructional targets. The documentation provided in support of this alignment is relatively persuasive. Most of the assessments used are accompanied by evidence demonstrating that they satisfy accepted technical requirements.	Level 3

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
2.	Test Administration	Most of the assessments used by the institution to determine students' performances have been administered with reasonable fidelity to the administrative procedures appropriate for each assessment. In most instances, the students to whom these assessments were administered are essentially representative of the students served by the institution. Appropriate accommodations have been provided for most assessments so that valid inferences can be made about most students' status with respect to most of the institution's targeted curricular outcomes.	Level 3

	Statement or Question	Response	Rating
3.	Quality of Learning	Evidence of student learning promoted by the institution is acceptably analyzed and presented with reasonable clarity. 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 at or above what would otherwise be expected.	Level 3

	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?

Towns County Schools show high levels of achievement in the CCRPI-College and Career Readiness Performance Index scores. In comparing our district to other districts in the state our district scored the ninth highest score in the state. In comparing our CCRPI score to others in our RESA our district score was the 2nd highest. Our middle and elementary schools both ranked second as individual schools in our district and our high school had the highest CCRPI score in the RESA.

Reading is an area of achievement above the expected level of performance. In 2013, Towns County Elementary had a 96.1% pass rate compared to the state at 94.2% in Reading. In 2014, we had a 98.5% passing rate in reading, while the state of Georgia passing rate was 94.2%. Seventh graders at Towns County Middle School ranked third win the RESA with a 97.6% pass rate. These students also ranked first in English/language arts with a 98.8% pass rate. Eighth graders ranked second in English/language arts with a 98.9% pass rate. Our ninth and tenth graders ranked first in the RESA with 97.98% and 98.72% pass rates in ninth grade literature and American literature.

In 2014, Fourth Grade science and social studies scored above the expected level of performance. The state average in science was 85.9%, while Towns County Elementary fourth graders had a 97.2% pass rate. This resulted in being ranked first in our RESA in fourth grade science. Fourth grade social studies also made notable achievements in 2014. These students scored at a 97.2% pass rate above the state average of 86.5%. This pass rate was the second highest pass percentage in our RESA. Fourth grade social studies also had the highest exceeds rate in our RESA with 55.6% of students exceeding the standard.   Seventh graders ranked second in the RESA with a 94.3% pass rate in science. They also ranked first in social studies with a 97.7% pass rate. Our eighth grade students had 100% passing rate which was the highest in our RESA. Biology students in the high school ranked second in the RESA with a 93.15% pass rate. Economics and Unites States history were both ranked second in the RESA with 92% and 87.50% pass rates.

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

As a system we see a positive trend with increasing scores on the College and Career Readiness Performance Index measure. We continue to see improvements in reading, science, and social studies as noted in the high performance information. We begin monitoring the Lexile levels of students in the elementary school and reward students for reaching Lexile level ranges that are above the state recommended levels for each grade level. This is a contributing factor to positive reading performance. Providing dedicated departmentalization for science and social studies beginning in the third grade has proven to benefit the elementary test scores and prepare students for science and social studies instruction as they advance through the grade levels.

Which area(s) indicate the overall highest performance?

Scores indicate that Reading has the overall highest performance. In 2013, 96.1% of all students passed the reading portion of the CRCT. 2014 reports show that 98.6% of all students at TCES passed reading, with 54.5% of those exceeding the standard. 100% of students in fifth grade in 2014 passed reading. Grade 4 was second in our RESA in 2014 for reading, while 5th grade placed first in the RESA. Seventh graders at Towns County Middle School ranked third win the RESA with a 97.6% pass rate. These students also ranked first in English/language arts with a 98.8% pass rate. Eighth graders ranked second in English/language arts with a 98.9% pass rate. Our ninth and tenth graders ranked first in the RESA with 97.98% and 98.72% pass rates in ninth grade literature and American literature.

Notable gains are being made in science and social studies, as well. The pass rate for science students moving from third grade to fourth grade rose 16% in 2014, while their exceeds rate increased 25%. In social studies, these same students increased their pass rate 20.4%, while their exceeds rate increased from 17.4% in 2013 to 55.6% in 2014. Seventh graders ranked second in the RESA with a 94.3% pass rate in science. They also ranked first in social studies with a 97.7% pass rate. Our eighth grade students had 100% passing rate which was the highest in our RESA. Biology students in the high school ranked second in the RESA with a 93.15% pass rate. Economics and Unites States history were both ranked second in the RESA with 92% and 87.50% pass rates.

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

All three schools in the district showed improvement in the overall CCRPI score. In 2013 the district score was 80.9 and in 2014 the score was 86.6. This was a 5.7 point improvement from last year. The 2014 score is the ninth highest district score in the state.
In reading we saw increased pass percentage rates in third, fifth, sixth, and eighth grades. Both fourth and seventh grades remained the same with a 98.9% pass percentage. We saw an increase in exceeds rates in third, fifth, sixth, and eighth grades. In the high school American literature increased in pass percentage by 13.5% and the exceeds rate increased by 36.2%. Ninth grade literature had similar results with a pass percentage increase of 8.3% and an exceeds rate increase of 30%.   In 2014 when language arts continued to be a separate test prior to the new Milestones test, results showed that we increased the pass percentage rates in third, fifth, and seventh grades. Eighth grade remained the same at 99%. Both third and eighth grades showed increases   in the exceeds rate.
Science and social studies both show positive trends toward increasing performance. All grades with the exception of fifth and seventh increased their pass percentage and showed improvement in the exceeds rate on the CRCT. Biology also showed an increase in pass percentage. In social studies all grades with the exception of fifth grade increased in pass percentage. Fifth grade had a 1% decrease in pass percentage . Grades three, four, six, and eight all showed increases in the exceeds rate on the CRCT.   Economics had a 21% increase in the pass percentage and a 22.4% increase in the exceeds rate.

Between which subgroups is the achievement gap closing?

The achievement gap is closing for white and economically disadvantaged children in reading. In reading the percentage of students not meeting the standard is at 1.1% while the exceeds rate is 54% in the elementary school. The number of students in the elementary school who are not meeting the standard has dropped from 18% to 7%. The middle school also showed closing of the gap for economically disadvantaged students in social studies. In the high school the achievement gap is closing for all subgroups with the exception of economically disadvantaged students in math.

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

At Towns County Elementary and Middle Schools, we use Scholastic software to benchmark our students in reading and math at least three times per year. The data indicates that the number of students who are beginning readers on the Scholastic Inventory has decreased from twenty-nine students in grade two in the fall of 2014 to four students as indicated on the winter assessments. This scholastic program assesses student Lexiles in reading or the difficulty of text that a student is able to comprehend. Students in first grade were administered the inventory in the winter of 2014 and in alignment with the CRCT and CCRPI, the results show that our young students are comprehending what they are reading. Another data sources is the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, a national nor med-referenced test that we administer every

two years to our first and second graders to compare our students performance to others students in the nation. In 2015, nineteen first and second graders scored at or above the 90% percentile in either math or reading and will tested further for gifted eligibility. TCES teachers administer Easy CBM, Scholastic Math Inventories and IKAN math assessments for students quantile scores, fluency and gaps in mathematical foundations. The utilization of the Individual Knowledge Assessment of Number (IKAN) by the Towns County Middle School staff resulted in scores similar to the CRCT scores in the area of Mathematics for each of the subgroups. 2014 SAT scores and Georgia High School Writing Test scores are consistent with results of state test data.

Areas in Need of Improvement

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

As a district the area of achievement that is below our expectations is mathematics. Mathematics scores are in most cases above the state average but below our expectations as a system. This is one area in which we are working toward improvement.

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

Economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities subgroups have shown a negative trend in mathematics achievement and at some grade levels in language arts. At the high school level we saw a negative trend in the Analytic Geometry scores. While our scores are still above the state average we are working to increase student achievement in this course. The assessment criteria were updated prior to the 2014 administration and a significant change was detected.

Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest performance?

Mathematics achievement for students with disabilities and the area of geometry in the high school are the lowest performing areas for the system.

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

Economically disadvantaged students and some students with disabilities are showing a trend toward decreasing performance in math.   In the elementary and middle schools the students with disabilities subgroup have exhibited a slight performance decrease in English language arts on the CRCT.

**Between which subgroups is the achievement gap becoming greater?**

The achievement gap of students with disabilities remains steady in the elementary school. The students will disabilities is exhibiting an increasing achievement gap in reading based on CRCT score results over the past three years. In the high school the economically disadvantaged subgroup has an increasing gap in the area of mathematics.

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

 Towns County Elementary School teachers administer Easy CBM, Scholastic Math Inventories and IKAN math assessments for students quantile scores, fluency and gaps in mathematical foundations. The utilization of the Individual Knowledge Assessment of Number (IKAN) by the Towns County Middle School staff resulted in scores similar to the CRCT scores in the area of Mathematics for each of the subgroups

Report Summary

Scores By Section

Section Score

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics — 3
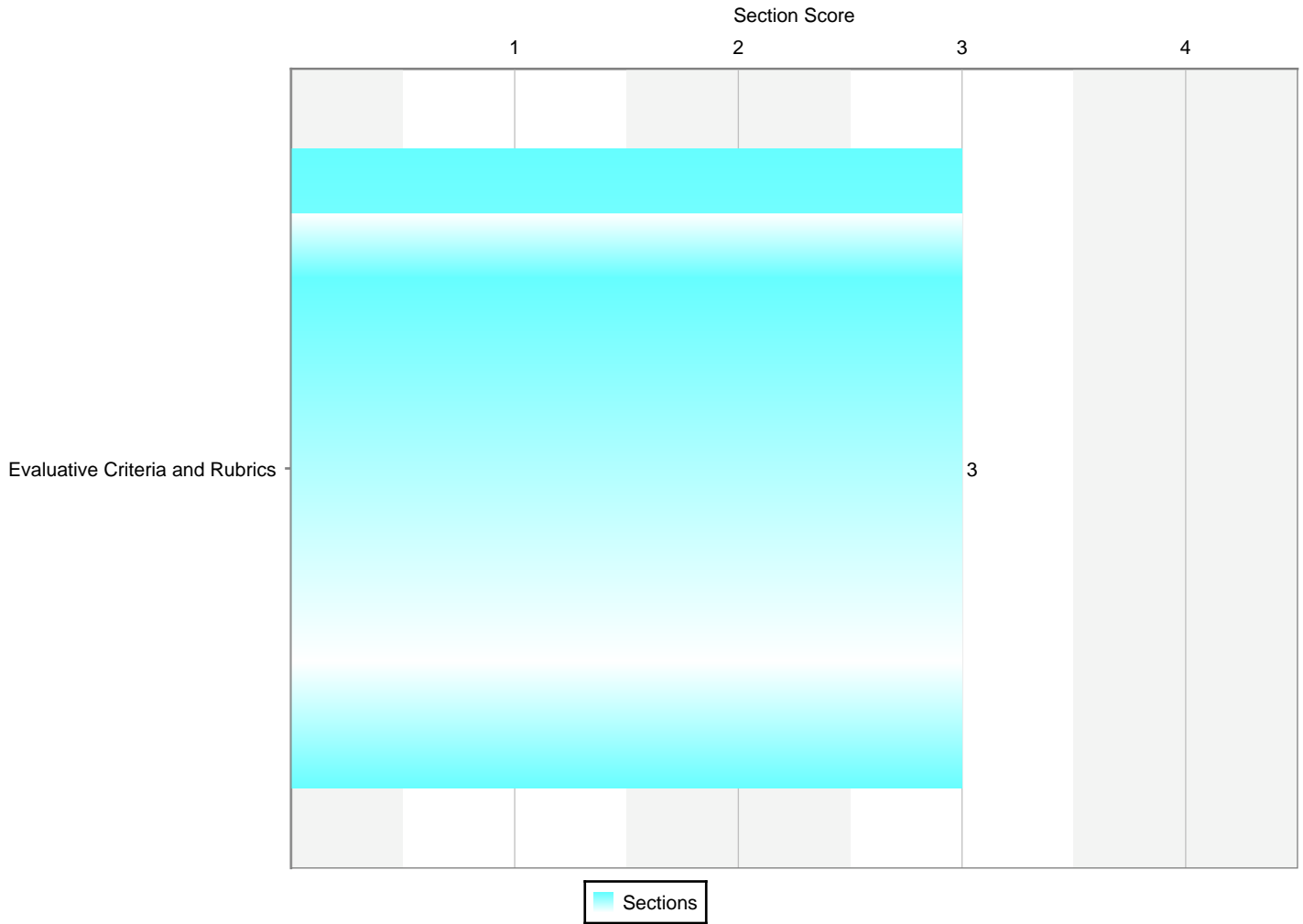
Sections

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		Towns County Schools Emergency Operations Plan

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		Towns County School System Improvement Plan 2015-2016

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		Quality Assurance Monitoring Process Towns County Schools