Accreditation Report

Valdosta City Schools

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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?

Valdosta City Schools serves over 7,800 students in one of 10 campuses across our district. VCS is accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission and holds District Accreditation with AdvancED. In 2013, Valdosta High School was recognized by the Georgia AdvancED office for celebrating 100 years of accreditation. Since 2006, our district has seen a 13% increase in enrollment. The district's campuses include five elementary schools, two middle schools, a high school, alternative school, and Early College program. Our majority-minority school district represents a diverse population with approximately 75% of students being eligible for Free & Reduced Rate meals; however, our district participates in the Community Eligibility Provision allowing all students to receive free meals through our school nutrition program. Valdosta City Schools is the fifth largest employer in the community with 1,087 employees. Of our certified staff, 65% have advanced degrees. Special services are provided to the following students: special education (12.7%), gifted education (5.7%), and English Learners (2.2%). Approximately 36% of students receive early and remedial intervention services. In 2015, 439 graduates received a regular diploma. Our district has 10 state-funded pre-Kindergarten classrooms and 3 special education preschool classrooms. Approximately 4,100 students are transported to and from school each day by school transportation services. Over 11,000 meals including breakfast and lunch are provided daily to our students. All of our schools are Title I School-wide programs. Our annual general and special revenue funds budget is approximately $76 million, with additional capital projects funds to support building of our new high school.

Valdosta is located in the south central portion of Georgia and is the tenth largest metropolitan area in the state. Valdosta has a successful business climate, proactive government, and is easily accessed from Interstate I-75 and I-10. Travel is convenient to the Valdosta area through the Valdosta Regional Airport. Valdosta is also a regional rail center for CSX, Norfolk Southern and Valdosta Railway. Valdosta is located 240 miles south of the state capital of Atlanta, and approximately fifteen miles north of the Florida border. As of 2014, the Valdosta population consists of approximately 57,000 citizens, and the estimated metropolitan area population is approximately 143,000. According to 2013 estimates, the median household income in Valdosta is $29,371, and approximately 33% of the population lives in poverty. Over 22% of the population over 25 years of age have a bachelor's degree or higher. Along with Valdosta City Schools, children living in the metro Valdosta area are served by two public school districts, Valdosta City Schools and Lowndes County Schools, and other private, charter, and parochial schools. Lowndes County is the home of Moody Air Force Base and Valdosta State University.

Based on our school and community demographics, Valdosta City Schools can be considered a small, urban school district. Our district experiences a variety of challenges related to the poverty of our children and families. In addition, we often must combat negative perceptions and stereotypes applied to our students and district from the community. Many of our students have significant emotional, social, and behavioral needs that must be addressed to ensure educational progress and success. Due to the significant needs of our students, additional demands are often required of teachers, leaders, and support staff to educate children. Our district recognizes that to meet the complex needs of our students, we must expand our available student support services, equip teachers and leaders with more strategies for addressing the social and emotional needs of our students, and ensure a culturally competent staff engages and motivates all students to learn. VCS is a strong, resilient school district that is reimagining who we are and what we can accomplish together for all students through our new leadership and vision for our district's future.

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.

Over the past year, Valdosta City Schools used a process developed by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) to develop an updated strategic improvement plan for the district. This comprehensive process engaged the community and all stakeholder groups to create universal ownership and support for district and school improvement. From this year-long process the district developed the 2016-2020 VCS Strategic Improvement Plan which aligns to the district's vision, "to provide infinite possibilities for the future," and mission, to ensure "quality teaching and learning, resulting in superior performance for all." As a result of the strategic planning process, VCS updated our beliefs to provide clearer and more concise statements of the core values of our organization. After multiple iterations, the beliefs were overwhelming approved by our Board and stakeholder groups. The newly adopted beliefs are as follows:

1. Positive relationships, high expectations, and a safe environment are essential for quality teaching and learning.
2. All students have unique needs and learn when provided relevant instruction and support.
3. Students, teachers, and leaders must utilize critical thinking, digital literacy, and technology skills to be globally competitive.
4. Effective educators motivate and engage students in the learning process.
5. Continuous improvement, collaboration, and shared decision-making among all stakeholders are fundamental to teaching, learning, and school effectiveness.
6. Activities beyond core academics promote relationships and connections that are critical to student learning and life-long success.

The 2016-2020 VCS Strategic Improvement Plan will serve as a road map to address students' needs and build capacity for improvement. Our goal is for students to strive for excellence and to be enthusiastic and hopeful about learning for today and their future. Valdosta City Schools' vision for teachers and administrators centers on high expectations for all students, teachers, and leaders. We believe that quality teachers and leaders are critical to exemplary student achievement and outcomes. We want our leaders and teachers to utilize 21st Century Technology to enhance teaching and learning. We are striving to develop a coaching culture within our district to include high levels of collegiality, trust, and collaboration. The relationship of the adults within each building and throughout the district is critical. Moreover, we know that competent, caring, and nurturing adults are prerequisites for students to learn. We believe in a continuous improvement model for teachers and administrators focused on using data to inform and enhance innovative practices. Our vision is for teachers and administrators to continuously engage in focused conversations around teaching and learning. Through our efforts we intend for Valdosta City Schools to be a model school district for other systems in south Georgia, our state, and nation to observe and learn from as we advance our 2016-2020 VCS Strategic Improvement Plan.

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.

Valdosta City Schools has improved the district's graduation rate 23% in the past five years. As of 2015, 77.7% of students graduated in four years (Georgia's rate is 78.8%). In addition, the four-year graduation rate for students with disabilities was 53.6% (an increase of 36 points since 2012). In 2015, the legacy class of students from our Early College program, VECA, graduated with numerous dual enrollment credits. Our district has seen significant increases in dual enrollment for all high school students since 2012. As of fall 2015, over 260 students participated in over 600 college credits during first semester. Our International Baccalaureate Programme continues to increase enrollment and the percentage of students successfully earning the prestigious IB Diploma. In 2015, 31 seniors participated in IB exams and 45% of our students earned the IB Diploma. The Advanced Placement program offers 12 AP courses to students. Since 2010, our district has increased the percentage of students passing AP exams with a 3, 4, or 5 from 31% to 47%. Over 240 students are taking one or more AP courses during the 2015-2016 school year.

Our district has expanded the AVID program to serve over 550 students in middle and high school. In the past 2 years, we have added three additional Pre-Kindergarten classrooms. Advanced course options in middle school have continued to expand over the past three years to equip more students with the necessary content depth, skills and study habits to be successful in high school advanced course offerings. The district has increased STEM initiatives in all schools and is working to pilot a STEM Academy at one of our middle schools in 2016-2017. Additional specialty and choice school options are being actively explored to meet the academic needs and interests of our students and families. In an effort to serve more students through preK, our district applies for new pre-Kindergarten classes each year as the Department of Early Care and Learning makes applications available.

For many years, our district had a least one school identified based on the Statewide Accountability System under NCLB or ESEA. As of June 2015, none of the schools in our district were identified as low-performing schools and our 2 schools (VMS and VHS) on the "list" were removed from the Focus Schools designation. On the state's accountability index, College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), our schools and district have continued to make steady gains. Our most recent 2014 CCRPI Score for the district's elementary and middle levels was above the state's average. Our district has not received 2015 CCRPI scores to date.

Valdosta-Lowndes county residents have approved multiple Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) initiatives to support funding education in the community. The most recent ESPLOST V was approved in March 2015 and is projected to generate approximately $9 million in revenue annually for the two local school districts. Valdosta is the hub of retail trade for many of the surrounding counties, and over half of funds raised from sales tax collections come from non-residents of our community. Using funds generated through ESPLOST, Valdosta City Schools has recently completed our newest state-of-the-art school, Pinevale Elementary, and a new sports complex at JL Newbern Middle. In fall 2015, we started clearing land for the new Valdosta High School which is projected to open 2018-2019. Check out the overview of the school at https://goo.gl/HGqZn4. Progress on the site and facility can be viewed via our website with updated photographs posted at http://goo.gl/A8dICv.

In July 2014, VCS was granted unitary status for fully complying with the remaining orders for desegregation related to faculty and staff, originating from our initial 1970 Federal Court Order requiring the school district to desegregate schools. The initial efforts to bring closure to this long-standing federal case began in 2008 by our former superintendent, Dr. William O. Cason. While the district made great efforts to address staffing as required by the Consent Decrees of 2008 and 2012, ongoing attention to staffing are necessary to ensure high quality,

effective staff are equitably hired and retained throughout all schools.

The most pressing challenge for our organization has been the rapid, significant turnover of staff at the district and school levels. For the 2015-2016 school year, the district had turnover in the following positions: Superintendent, Director of Human Resource, Director of Special Education, Director of Federal Programs, Director of Testing, and Director of Transportation. At the school level, 6 of our 10 schools were assigned new principals and assistant principals. While changes in district and school administration create inherent disruptions, our district recognizes the great opportunity afforded by having new staff in these positions. Our efforts will continue to focus on managing the change and ensuring adequate communication, training, and support are provided to staff during the transition. In addition to leadership turnover at the district and schools, over the past four years, 55% of all teachers are new to Valdosta City Schools. The significant teacher turnover contributes to a variety of organizational challenges related to mentoring, induction, recruitment, professional development, coaching, and school culture to name a few.

Additional Information

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

In 2011, several community members, along with the Chamber of Commerce, initiated a consolidation movement to combine the city and county school systems which resulted in a School Consolidation Referendum being added to the November 8, 2011 ballot for the city of Valdosta. Voters in our city overwhelming voted no for consolidation. Following rejection of the consolidation efforts, several supporters of the consolidation movement directed their effort towards charter school options for our community. A charter petition was presented to both school districts in March 2014, with subsequent unanimous denial by both school boards in July 2014. Based on Georgia law, the petition was later granted by the State Charter Schools Commission in October 2014. The first charter school, Scintilla Charter Academy (SCA), opened in 2015. The opening of SCA was challenging for VCS because the founding principal was a former teacher, coach, and administrator in our district. In addition, the school heavily recruited many of our veteran teachers and students from across the district. Ten staff members resigned from our district to work at Scintilla and over 180 students withdrew from VCS.

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: 3.5

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 process for review, revision, and communication of the system's purpose is clearly documented, and a record of the use and results of the process is maintained. The process is formalized and implemented with fidelity on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives selected at random from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement clearly focuses on student success.	•District purpose statements - past and present •Survey results •Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders •Written District Quality Assurance Review procedures and documents that monitor its schools' adherence to the district purpose and direction •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 •Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness	Level 4

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 clearly 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 and training for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel.	•Survey results •Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements •Written District Quality Assurance Review procedures and documents that monitor schools' adherence to the district purpose and direction and that of the school •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 4

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.	•District Quality Assurance Review plans that document two-way communication on district and school effectiveness and learning, thinking, and life skills •Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans •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 •District Quality Assurance Review plans that document two-way communication on district and school effectiveness and learning, thinking, and life skills •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 data profile •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.

Valdosta City Schools implements a Continuous Improvement Cycle at the district and school levels that consist of an ongoing review of data and outcomes through our annual school improvement planning/data retreats, school improvement conferences, and school improvement reviews held throughout the year with district leadership, school principals, and school leadership teams. VCS strives to continuously engage our stakeholders (students, staff, parents and community members) through numerous surveys, our annual data retreat, multiple School Improvement (SIP) meetings, and parent feedback sessions throughout the year. VCS provides ongoing professional learning based on identified needs from our student learning data and data retreats, along with feedback from our staff through the VCS Comprehensive Needs Assessment completed annually. The district and schools embrace our shared vision, mission, and beliefs that focus on a strong commitment to teaching and learning, positive relationships, high expectations, and rigorous learning for all students. However, there continues to be a need to ensure all schools, classrooms, and teachers fully implement highly engaging and challenging learning experiences for all students.

The focus for improvement is data-driven by utilizing multiple formative and summative data sources: College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) reports, Georgia's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), and Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) System/School Report Cards. In addition to achievement data, district and school level educators systematically analyze multiple measures of data sources including demographics, school processes, and perceptions based on surveys (parents, students, and teachers) and needs assessments (teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals). Data is disaggregated and analyzed during annual school improvement planning/data retreats to develop a deeper understanding of the strengths and weakness of the district and school. From the data analysis and input of teachers and leaders, the school leadership teams develop SMART goals based on needs identified by data. The SMART goals are shared among schools to determine common initiatives and needs and to ensure alignment to the district strategic plan and initiatives. These "retreats" provide a dedicated time for district staff and leadership teams to collaboratively analyze data relevant to student performance and determine primary areas for school improvement. The data retreats provide valuable insights and feedback for informing the school and district improvement plans. Additionally, we have a clearly defined and well-established VCS Continuous

Improvement Cycle for monitoring of school improvement plans that includes district leadership, principals, and school leadership teams. The Plan-Do-Check-Act process includes ongoing school improvement planning meetings, three district-level school improvement conferences, and 45/60 day review meetings with the principal and school leadership team at multiple times throughout the year.

Valdosta City Schools has recently adopted a comprehensive strategic plan with clearly defined strategic goals, objectives, initiatives, and performance targets for the next 5 years, our 2020 Vision. Over the next year we will work to develop systematic prioritization, implementation, review, and monitoring of the plan by the VBOE, district, and schools to ensure progress towards our goals and performance targets. We recognize a need to develop better processes at the district and school levels for monitoring of implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of plans and initiatives to determine impact on teacher and leader effectiveness, and most importantly student learning. Our next focus for improvement at the district and school levels will be to ensure fidelity of implementation; evaluation of initiatives, programs, and outcomes; and pervasive use of school effectiveness research and evidence-based practices to inform selection of instructional initiatives, programs, and strategies.

Governance and Leadership

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

Overall Rating: 3.5

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 •Student handbooks •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •Staff handbooks •District operations manuals •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 implemented a process to evaluate its decisions and actions to ensure they are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a formally adopted code of ethics, and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members are required to participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The professional development curriculum also includes conflict resolution, decision-making, supervision and evaluation, and fiscal responsibility. Members comply with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations and function as a cohesive unit for the benefit of effective system operation and student learning.	•Governing authority minutes relating to training •Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest •Proof of legal counsel •Governing authority training plan •Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies •Governing authority policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest •Governing code of ethics	Level 4

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 consistently protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations of the system and its schools. The governing body maintains a clear distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of system and school leadership.	•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 •Survey results regarding functions of the governing authority and operations of the district •Stakeholder input and feedback •Agendas and minutes of meetings	Level 4

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 deliberately and consistently align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. They encourage, support, and expect all personnel to maintain high standards and to hold students to high standards in all courses of study. All stakeholders are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system actively and consistently support and encourage innovation, collaboration, shared leadership, and rigorous professional growth. The culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community among all stakeholders.	•Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan •Professional development offerings and plans •Examples of collaboration and shared leadership •Examples of decisions aligned with the school's purpose statement •Survey results •Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans •Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs •Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction	Level 4

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 •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	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 •Job specific criteria •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.

Valdosta City Schools has policies and practices which support the system's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. These policies and practices support student learning, effective instruction and assessment that produce equitable and rigorous learning experiences for all students. The VCS governing body is comprised of established professionals who take their job responsibilities seriously and thus maintain 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 annual systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. All new board members attend 15 hours of training on local district orientation, school finance and budgeting, state's core curriculum, and whole board governance team training. Established board members complete 9 hours of annual training based on the state's core curriculum and whole board governance team training. In addition, our school board has a minimum of 2 annual board retreats to provide extended time for training and district planning. The governing body complies with all policies, procedures, laws and regulations, and functions as a cohesive unit.

VCS has worked diligently to be financially stable over the past decade, despite $41.8 million in cuts to state funding since 2003 and a reduction in local tax revenue due to the economic downturn since 2008. We experienced voluntary furlough days in 2012-2013 and some reduction in employee benefits since 2011 to balance our budget; however, the district intends to fully restore employee benefits in 2017.

Notwithstanding the reduction in state funds and local revenues sources, the district leadership has been able to construct new facilities, sustain locally funded personnel, and maintain and expand instructional programs to support the educational needs of our students. These feats have been accomplished largely due to the governing body and system and school leadership showing sound financial judgment and planning, while consistently protecting, supporting and respecting the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations of the system and its schools. The governing body maintains a clear distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of system and school leadership.

Additional VCS strengths include our well-established VCS Continuous Improvement Cycle and our strong professional learning which allows leaders and staff throughout the system to deliberately and consistently align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. There is an expectation that all personnel maintain high standards and hold students to high standards in all courses of study. All stakeholders are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system actively and consistently support and encourage innovation, collaboration, shared leadership and rigorous professional growth. The Valdosta City Schools' culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community among all stakeholders, however, a more comprehensive and consistent plan to ensure ownership of the system's purpose to all staff and stakeholders is needed.

The primary focus of the Valdosta City Schools' supervision and evaluation programs (Teacher Keys Effectiveness System and Leader Keys Effectiveness System) is improving professional practice in all areas of teaching and learning and ensuring student success. The TKES and LKES evaluation systems are consistently and regularly implemented. The results of these processes are analyzed carefully and used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice throughout the system and ensure student learning. Additional efforts to address uniformity and inter-rater reliability among evaluators in the school and across the district would enhance the evaluation system. While the state has provided a quality evaluation framework for teachers and leaders, there continues to be a need for revised evaluation models for support staff, district leaders, and non-certified staff.

Most recently, VCS has implemented a Comprehensive Strategic Planning process and is redefining Professional Learning Communities to align with new expectations from the state for recertification and effective educational practice. Based on changes in state certification that promote teacher leadership, our strong commitment to coaching, and significant needs for teacher mentoring and induction, we intend to develop programs and supports for developing teacher leaders and aspiring leaders within our district.

Through the AdvancEd self-assessment process, Valdosta City Schools has identified several areas for improvement centered mainly on ensuring pervasive commitment and ownership of the system's purpose among all stakeholders, productive Professional Learning Communities, development of quality Teacher Leadership and Aspiring Leaders programs, and evaluation models for staff not included in the state-wide evaluation system of TKES and LKES. Finally, continued efforts are needed to ensure ongoing fidelity to and consistency of the TKES and LKES evaluation systems to increase the effectiveness of teachers and leaders.

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: 2.92

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 •Course or program descriptions •Survey results •Lesson plans •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	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 •A description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment •Common assessments •Standards-based report cards •Surveys results •Program descriptions •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 •Findings from supervisor formal and informal observations •Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool •Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge •Surveys results •Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs	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.	•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 •Surveys results •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	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.	•Common language, protocols and reporting tools •Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees •Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings •Survey results •Professional development funding to promote professional learning communities •Peer coaching guidelines and procedures •Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration	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.	•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Survey results •Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction •Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning •Samples of student and teacher goal setting sheets	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.	•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	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 •Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress •Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process	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 •Description of formalized structures for adults to advocate on behalf of students •Survey results •Master schedule with time for formalized structure	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.	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.	•Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices •Survey results •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	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.	•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.

Valdosta City Schools' curriculum provides the groundwork for all students to experience equitable and challenging learning opportunities that ensure the development of learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for future success. State standards establish expectations and support student engagement in the learning process by guiding the implementation of research-based strategies and programs in the district. All students in grades Pre-Kindergarten (PK) through grade 8 participate in the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Comprehensive English Language Arts Program which was adopted district-wide in the spring of 2014. The HMH program utilized in PK is SPLASH. Kindergarten through grade 5 are instructed in ELA and reading through Journeys, while grades 6-8 utilize Collections. All three programs are researched based programs that provide whole group and small group instruction as well as special learning paths for struggling and high-achieving students. The Georgia Mathematics Frameworks are utilized in grades K-5 as the primary mathematics curriculum, while GO Math from HMH was adopted in 2015 for middle grades.   Mathematics texts aligned with updated Georgia standards were purchased for high school classes as well. Science and social studies curricula in all grade bands are based upon GPS standards but also include GSE literacy standards.

For the past two years, the district has implemented advanced content options in the middle school grades (6-8) in the content areas of English/Langauge Arts and Mathematics. These programs are open access and offered to promote academic rigor and preparation for advanced course options in high school. Middle school students are able to receive high school credit for foreign language and math during eighth grade. Ongoing planning for expanding high school credit offerings in the middle schools are being explored for the 2016-2017 school year. The district also utilizes online learning to provide high school credit to students at the middle and high levels and additional foreign language options to students in elementary and middle school on a limited basis. The district recognizes a need to expand and leverage online learning to provide more educational options for students.

The district is striving to incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) activities and initiatives across all schools. At our middle schools, a STEM/robotics elective is being piloted. Our district participates in an annual STEAM Day that includes a Science Fair, Art Competition, and Robotics Competition. The district was recently awarded a grant to implement Project Lead the Way (PLTW) in our K-8 schools during 2016-2017. PLTW provides problem-based STEM curriculum and high-quality teacher professional development.

VCS participates in Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) for our middle and high school students. AVID is a K-16 college-readiness system implemented in school systems, colleges, and universities internationally. AVID is offered as an elective course in middle and high school that includes an AVID research-based curriculum focused on Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading (WICOR). A week in AVID may include college readiness strategies, college tutor-led AVID Tutorology tutorials, binder-reviews, and motivational activities. College and university visits each year provide VCS AVID students first-hand knowledge of what college requires and has to offer.

Several other scientifically researched based programs are incorporated into the curriculum to meet the varied learning needs of our students. These programs include, but are not limited to: Read 180, Accelerated Reader, DreamBox Math, MyOn, V-Math, Language!, and Waterford. Many of these programs are available and accessible to students via the Internet at home, in community centers, and after school programs.

VCS supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equality, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity. Students are readily given the opportunity to extend, enrich, explore, and explain through problem-solving and critical thinking experiences. Rigorous honors, accelerated, and gifted courses are designed to develop and maximize students' abilities. Academic clubs and extracurricular activities also reinforce student learning outside the classroom setting. VCS provides drug and safety education, alternative placement settings, school counseling programs, health and nutrition programs, credit recovery programs, after school programs, and various diploma options that reflect a commitment to equity and to addressing student diversity. CTAE courses and other classes that support work programs are implemented at the high school level. Students are offered a variety of choices related to academic, technical, and elective courses. Honors, International Baccalaureate, and dual enrollment/ Move on When Ready courses are available to students at Valdosta High School.

VCS implements a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework that consists of problem-solving teams called Pyramid of Intervention Teams (POINT) in our schools. Within the RTI framework a variety of programs are available to meet the academic and social/ behavioral needs of students. Other programs that provide equitable and challenging learning experiences include: Intervention services provided through Early Intervention Program (EIP) and Remedial Education Program (REP), 504, special education programs, Title I Intervention Specialists services in K-5, speech and language programs, gifted education programs, English Learners (EL) programs, Summer Transition Program for entering Kindergarten students, migrant programs, 21st Century Learning Programs, homebound services, online learning opportunities, and extended learning opportunities before and after school.

VCS takes exceptional pride in two programs unique to our district in the South Georgia area. These Programs are the Valdosta Early College Academy (VECA) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. VECA has a strong academic focus with the expectation that all students will attend college. The program is strongly supported by our local university, Valdosta State University (VSU), and community partners. The student-centered learning community provides engaging and rigorous coursework. Students are given the care and support needed to meet high expectations, succeed in school, and be prepared for college coursework. The curriculum taught through VECA blends middle/high school and college into a seamless, technology-rich education program. VECA also provides rigorous curriculum with high academic and behavioral expectations offering small classes in a collaborative and discovery learning environment. Instruction is designed to meet the needs of each student focusing on Math, Science, and Language Arts. The target population for VECA includes low-income, first generation high school/college students who are struggling learners with potential. The students become members of the VSU campus community with access and privileges to many university resources. Any fifth-grade student enrolled in VCS may apply for admission to VECA. VHS is honored to be an IB World school. The program's goal to equip candidates to succeed through a rigorous, dynamic curriculum that is recognized and respected by the world's leading universities. The VHS IB Program consists of six academically challenging courses taken during the 11th and 12th-grade years. In addition, the program also has three additional components: Extended Essay, CAS

(Creativity, Action, and Service) and the Theory of Knowledge course. The IB Program is a comprehensive and rigorous program that promotes international and multicultural understanding of the world.

A VCS Mentoring Program has been developed to support and retain new teachers. Mentor teachers are required to go through mentor training with Professional Learning. Incoming faculty and student teachers are paired with a mentor to ensure retention and success. Mentors are required to meet with their assigned teacher(s) on a regular basis. New hires are not only provided an orientation session prior to school beginning but also several days of initial training for all areas of the curriculum. During the week before pre-planning all schools host mentoring activities in addition to district level sessions. Mentor teachers and academic coaches assist new teachers through job-embedded professional learning and coaching.

The LEA maintains a Comprehensive Professional Learning Plan that addresses guidelines and procedures for district, school, and individual professional development. Professional learning is aligned to the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans within the district. Our district places a strong priority on job-embedded professional learning that empowers leaders, teachers, and paraprofessionals to meet the diverse needs of our students. The funding of academic coaches is an identified priority for Valdosta City Schools. Through this initiative, the district is able to increase the amount of job-embedded, research-based professional learning and targeted coaching it is able to provide for its teachers and paraprofessionals before, during, and after the school day and school year. A Professional Learning Program Advisory Council has been established to include teachers, site-based professional learning contacts from each school, academic coaches, curriculum, technology, and special education. Individual schools have professional learning committees that collectively make recommendations based on analysis of student achievement data. These plans are executed under the direction of the site-based professional learning contact and the school administrator. All such professional learning activities are monitored by the system Teaching & Learning Coordinator/Director of Professional Learning.

Through Standard 3 Committee Meetings, a consensus was reached that though VCS conducts a some vertical teamwork within grade bands (i.e., K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) and frequent horizontal teamwork, there is a need to expand vertical teamwork across grade bands. Strengthening the vertical alignment processes within grade bands was also determined to be a need. As Standard 3 discussions took place throughout the internal review process, it was determined that there needs to be increased collaboration between the high school and the district. Also, this weakness has been communicated by administrators and school leadership teams during our school improvement conferences.

While our secondary schools have dedicated time for advisement and academic extension within the weekly schedule, there are no structures across all schools in the system to guarantee each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience. In addition, schools have limited opportunities for mentoring programs utilizing school and community mentors. Additional efforts at developing and implementing viable advisement and mentoring programs are needed.

In order to sustain areas of strength and to improve areas of need, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are continuously monitored and adjusted through our district's Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) Cycle. Each school within the district has a current and up to date School Improvement Plan (SIP) that targets specific program needs and instructional goals based on individual school data. These plans align with the District Strategic Plan and Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). The goal of these plans is to increase student achievement, close achievement gaps, and celebrate areas of success within the district and schools. The SIP is revisited and monitored on a 45-day cycle by the district and is the blueprint for teaching and learning initiatives in the school. Teachers and administrators meet regularly to align the SIP with current school needs. The Teaching and Learning (T&L) Team assists school leadership teams in aligning and developing their individual School Improvement Plans. The T&L Team meets with School Leadership Teams throughout the process to provide support and guidance on SMART goals, selected strategies, initiatives, and funding. Through the district School Improvement Conferences monitoring and feedback are provided to schools from the district T&L Team in the following categories: improvement priorities, powerful practices,

opportunities for improvement and district support. Schools also have an opportunity to provide specific district support needed to the T&L Team.

VCS analyzes both formative and summative data such as state test results and universal screening data. State assessments include Georgia Milestones End Of Course Tests, Georgia Milestones End of Grade Assessments, Universal Screening results, Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, Georgia Alternate Assessment, ACCESS for ELLS, COMPASS, Advanced Placement Examinations, International Baccalaureate Examinations, and Student Learning Objective Assessment results. The district conducts Universal Screening three times each year in grades K-8 using STAR Enterprise by Renaissance Learning.

Assessment and instructional practices are adjusted based upon data. Common formative and summative district developed assessments are created and revised by teams of district staff, academic coaches, and teachers. During professional learning days throughout the school year and during the summer, these curriculum teams participate in to refine and/or create curriculum documents and assessments. Work done during these sessions is redelivered to grade or content area teachers during pre-planning and throughout the school year during collaborative planning times or during sessions conducted by academic coaches. All common formative assessments, summative assessments and supporting curriculum documents are housed in Google Docs on the T&L Wiki for teacher access.

Data associated with the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) are continuously monitored as well. CCRPI is a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders that will promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students. Schools set SIP goals based upon selected CCRPI indicators.

VCS programs, assessments, and curricula provide students with the opportunities to utilize higher order thinking skills, solve problems, and incorporate creativity and innovation into student learning. Our district makes every effort to prepare students to pursue infinite possibilities for the future.

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: 2.88

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 •District budgets or financial plans for the last three years •District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools •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 •District quality assurance procedures showing district oversight of schools pertaining to school resources •Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources •Survey results •Examples of school calendars •District strategic plan showing resources support for district	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 •Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments •Example maintenance schedules for schools •School safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes	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 •Other: Annual Budget Planning Calendar, School Level Media/Technology Plans, District Technology Plan	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.	•Evaluation procedures and results of education resources •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 •Other: Destiny and AR Use Logs, School Level Media/Technology Plans	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 •District quality control procedures that monitor the effectiveness of technology services at the district-level and school-level •Assessments to inform development of district and school technology plans •Examples of school-level technology plans and budgets to improve technology services and infrastructure to students and staff •Other: Technology Replacement Plan and Budget, BYOD Process, Technology Student Handbook, Tech Support (1Cat) Ticket Reports, Google Consent Records, Cyber Safety, Webfilter CIPA	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 a process to determine the physical, social, and emotional needs of students and then selects or designs and implements programs to meet the needs of as many students as possible. System and school personnel regularly evaluate programs. Improvement plans related to these programs are sometimes 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 •Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education •List of support services available to students •Other: APEX Grant; School Social Work program overview, reports, and guidance documents; VCS School Counseling Program; PBIS Framework	Level 2

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.

Valdosta City Schools has recently adopted a comprehensive strategic plan with clearly defined strategic goals, objectives, initiatives, and performance targets for the next 5 years, our 2020 Vision. Over the next year we will work to develop systematic prioritization, implementation, review, and monitoring of the plan by the VBOE, district, and schools to ensure progress towards our goals and performance targets. The use of data in decision-making is critical and the district must continue to use data to evaluate the effectiveness of services, programs, and initiatives in an effort to ensure informed decisions about which services and programs work to aid in supporting students. Clear and written expectations are needed so district stakeholders know not only the procedures to follow, but who is responsible and accountable for maintaining a safe, clean, and healthy learning environment. The district is acquiring a management software package for operations to ensure quality standards are being met and that requests are dealt with in a timely fashion.

As our district continues to employ advancing technologies and embedding them in instructional practices, there is a strong need for instructional technologists to assist teachers in planning, implementation, and assessment. Our district has shown remarkable resilience during austerity as financially we have been able to maintain a strong fund balance, maintain our buildings thus providing for up-to-date, safe, and clean schools for which students are better able to learn. We have been able to financially implement our system technology plan through continuous upgrades to our infrastructure and classroom devices, thus allowing our district to stay ahead of the ever-changing technologies.

Our district needs to have a more comprehensive and effective process for addressing the social, behavioral, and emotional needs of our students. The district needs to promote evidenced-based interventions and documentation at all levels in order to help determine what is working to meet the social, behavioral, and emotional needs of all students. While the district maintains a social services database to report incidents and services provided, the information is not being utilized for data-based decision making to plan and develop services for students. Additional efforts to involve parents and leverage community resources to meet the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students are necessary to improve student outcomes such as attendance, discipline, on-time completion, and school readiness. The district maintains a school counselor to student ratio of 1:410. Since 2011, the district has committed to implementing a Comprehensive School Counseling Program to "provide all students with the opportunity to enhance academic development, explore career interests, and foster personal/social skills, thus preparing students to graduate from high school being college and career ready." Ongoing professional development related to addressing the social and emotional needs of students is needed across the district. The district has recently adopted a Wellness Policy; however, district and school wellness plans have not been developed to date. The district is working to revise crisis protocols to include prevention, intervention, and postvention responses to crisis events. Through the self-assessment process, stakeholders have endorsed more support for formalized mentoring programs across the district. Additional student support staff (school social workers, school nurses, and behavior intervention specialists) in schools would be beneficial to provide ongoing support for classroom management, crisis intervention, social-emotional curriculum, parent training, and mentoring. Several schools implement Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS), but this framework needs to be fully implemented across the district to providing ongoing support to students and teachers. While our PBIS program is still in the formative stages, additional district support to assist schools with program design, evidence-based interventions, implementation, and continuous improvement would be beneficial. The district must address the issue of evaluating the effectiveness of programs and the services delivered by school district support personnel in an effort to meet student needs, provide comprehensive school counseling services, evaluate RTI efforts, PBIS plans, and 504 requirements to build in flexibility and adaptability components so as not provide lock-step solutions.

We recognize that relationships are critical to student engagement and success, thus we should focus on building stronger and more authentic relationships with our students to include expanded co-curricular, as well as extra-curricular opportunities, for students across all grade levels.

We believe that our strategic planning model and long-range budget planning process will enable us to stay abreast of the needs of our district. It will be imperative that we continue to communicate clearly and build strong relationships with students, parents, community members, and faculty in order to make substantial improvements in the areas that we have identified as well as adjust to the changing needs of our stakeholders.

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: 2.8

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 •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	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.	•Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and 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 •List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support 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.	Most professional and support staff members are assessed and trained in a 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 2

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.	•Policies and procedures specific to data use and training •Student surveys •Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data •Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans •Evidence of student readiness for the next level •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.	•District quality control procedures for monitoring district effectiveness •Minutes of meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals •Survey results •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 •District quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, systems that support learning, and the 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	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.

Valdosta City Schools utilizes many research-based and national norm-referenced technology/ web-based platforms to support and monitor reading and mathematics. Program examples include Renaissance Learning STAR Reading and Mathematics assessment benchmarks. Lexile is monitored and supported with STAR, GMAS, MyON, Waterford, iRead, READ 180, and AR. Dreambox and VMath are utilized to support mathematics proficiency. Study Island is used to support each academic discipline at the secondary level. Our alternative school program and high school students also utilize online curriculum through A+ and Odysseyware to support the education delivery model. All programs and district assessments are reviewed and analyzed consistently throughout the school year and district review committees meet bi-annually to discuss common assessments. Google Docs is utilized to house district common assessments and each assessment is again reviewed for reliability and biases prior to and after each content unit.

Student state assessment data along with the available commercial and locally developed district assessment data are utilized to develop school improvement plans and related goals and initiatives at each VCS site. Goals are reviewed consistently by leadership teams and every 45 days with district school improvement specialists to develop short-term action plans (STAP). Schools have access to Benchmark 3000

equipment to analyze common assessments by standard and standard elements for intervention and acceleration data and action planning for teaching and learning. VCS employees and parents are surveyed annually to gather feedback on the VCS programs and practices through a VCS Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Parent/Guardian Survey. These data are used to inform district and school leadership action. Comprehensive data notebooks are utilized each June in the district data retreat to vertically discuss student achievement and strategic needs for each school year.
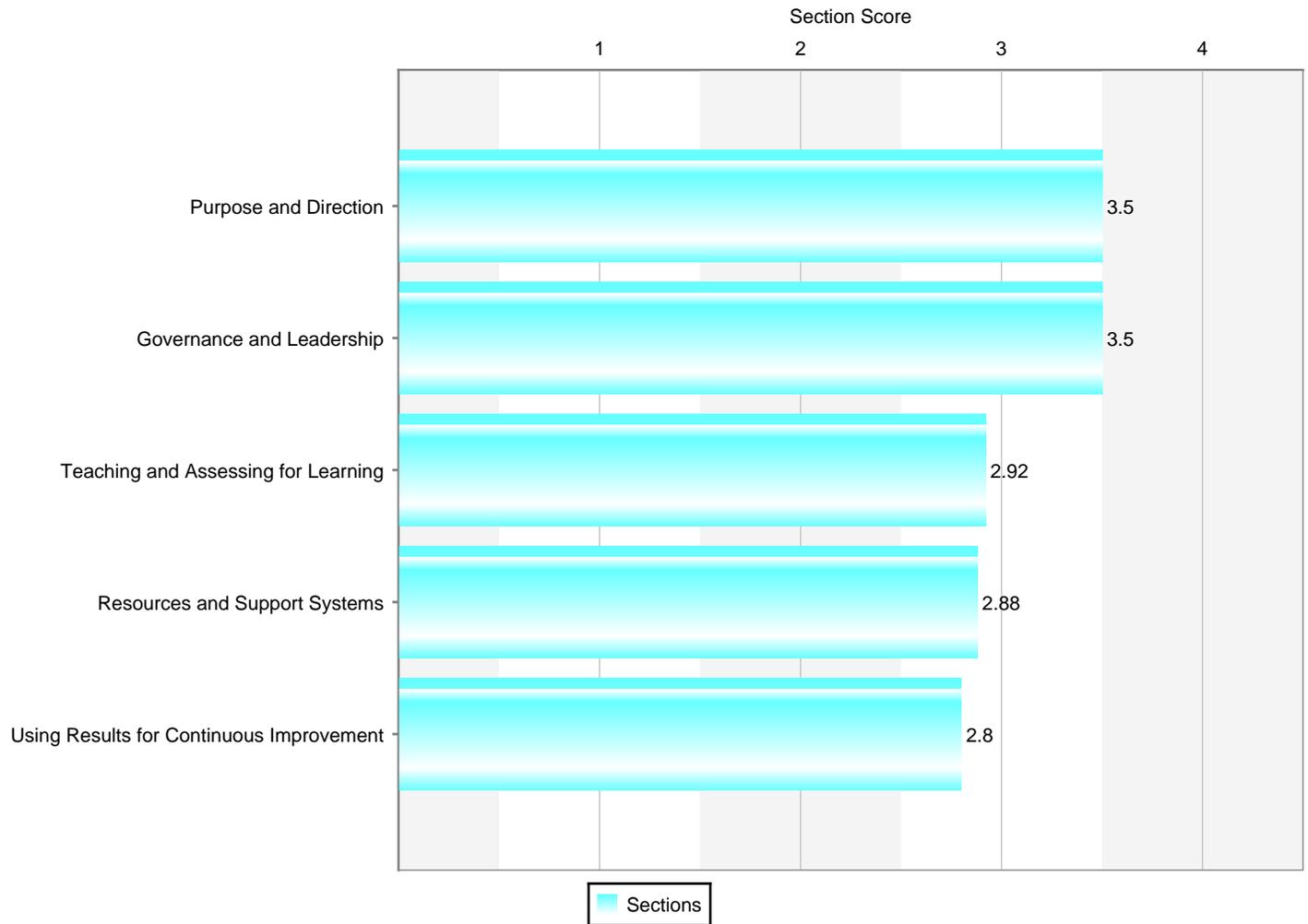
Comprehensive data notebooks are utilized in the district data retreat to vertically discuss student achievement and strategic needs for each school year. Schools utilize grade-level and content-area leaders to facilitate PLC and data discussions; however, this is a recognized area in need of improvement to ensure it is cascaded among all schools and teachers. District and school level administrators and academic coaches train and support teachers to analyze data such as student growth percentiles (SGPs), TKES evaluation, state assessment reports, STAR universal screening, benchmark data reports, the SLDS aggregate student data systems, and Infinite Campus assessment data reports through professional learning sessions and department meetings; due to recent, significant changes in the state assessment system, new training needs have emerged. District staff members, our local RESA, and commercial product vendors provide data use and interpretation support multiple times each school year. The district offers support and training on a multitude of data sources, but could better ensure consistent staff support through a district protocol. The district protocol could include a list of data sources with dates and expectations for data analysis, use, and training. The annual protocol would ensure all new staff received training and could perform at the same level of mastery as veteran staff. The protocol would also remove the uncertainty provided by staff when stating "We think most but not sure on all staff."

VCS utilizes a promotion and retention policy that is a combination of local and state guidelines. State assessment data, report card data, and Lexile are monitored heavily for each VCS student in regard to readiness, growth, and promotion in each grade-level. Student, teacher, and school goal-setting are utilized to support and encourage maximum achievement for a well-rounded student. Leadership teams utilize school improvement plans to set goals, initiatives, and action plans for continuous improvement. The VCS Continuous Improvement Cycle is provided and discussed with each school while developing school improvement plans.

School improvement facilitators are assigned to each school in the district to support schools. School improvement facilitators assist schools with monitoring school improvement plans (SIP), evaluation of SIP initiative effectiveness, and short-term action planning based on current student achievement, school climate, and stakeholder support. Report cards, progress reports, assessment reports, curriculum coversheets, Infinite Campus Parent Portal, parent conferences, open houses, district/ school all-call systems, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), school/district websites, flyers, superintendent parent councils, school councils, and an "open door" culture are used to regularly inform parents and the community about student and district performance.

Report Summary

Scores By Section

Section Score

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Purpose and Direction — 3.5

Governance and Leadership — 3.5

Teaching and Assessing for Learning — 2.92

Resources and Support Systems — 2.88

Using Results for Continuous Improvement — 2.8

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	District leadership provided support to schools during and after survey responses. Google Docs was utilized to track response rates for parents, staff, and students by each school. Paper surveys were copied by the district and district meetings were held to generate ideas for maximum survey participation. The online survey link for parents was provided on the district website, school websites, and paper forms. Staff and students were provided time and access for survey completion during the normal school day. Survey reports from ASSIST were analyzed by each school and the district.	VCS Survey Diagnostic

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.5

	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	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?

Early elementary and elementary students provided very high ratings for each standard. All secondary student rankings were 3.3 or above. Average score summaries for parent survey ratings for all schools were between 4.0 and 4.30 for each of the five standards. Staff provided high rankings for Standard 1 as other stakeholders, but also highest rankings for Standard 5 Using Results for Continuous Improvement. Consistency was demonstrated among standard rankings with a few standards rankings slightly higher as discussed above. Higher rankings for Standard 5 with staff surveys was promising as the district has encouraged data usage and action planning through activities such as district data retreats, PLCs, and school improvement plans.

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

Standard 1 Governance and Leadership received the highest ranked mean score for student, staff, and parent surveys. The district is also in the process of strategic planning which can be a possible contributor to this area of higher satisfaction.

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

Our 2015 Title Parent/ Guardian Survey data demonstrated leaders and staff make parents feel welcome at schools and are satisfied with how they are included in decision-making. Our 2015 VCS Comprehensive Needs Assessment for staff also demonstrated most teachers are utilizing data for professional practice often. The district is currently implementing a comprehensive needs assessment and Title I parent survey that can be compared with these 2016 results and AdvancEd data.

Areas in Need of Improvement

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

For student surveys, Standards 3 and 4 were ranked high, but the lowest. There was very little variation in standard rankings above 4.0 for parent surveys. Average score summaries for staff survey ratings were similar, but had mean scores slightly lower than 4.0 for Standard 3 and 4. Standard 3 was ranked last and it received the lowest rating from the high school staff. The high school has been less involved with district curriculum initiatives when compared with middle and elementary schools. The district can continue to support new state requirements for content standards and assessment requirement revisions. The district will continue to work to support PLCs and school improvement planning at all school levels.

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

For student surveys, Standards 3 and 4, possibly; however, trend data is not available. High school staff data demonstrates disconnect with teaching and learning practices utilized by the other school levels.

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

Ratings by students and parents provided high ratings across most standards, suggesting overall satisfaction by our students and parents. Staff support for Teaching and Learning and Resources and Support Systems are critical in maintaining high staff retention and school climate and culture. In the environment of state content standard and assessment requirement revisions, district support and a collaborative school environment are more important than ever for staff satisfaction and productivity.

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

Other student survey data was not available. Our 2015 Title Parent/ Guardian Survey data demonstrated parents would like workshops related to math support, test taking skills, study skills, and improving reading skills. Staff surveys demonstrate that they would like more instructional technology resources. A five year technology plan is in place and the district has invested a great deal of resources to purchase Chrome books, IPads, computer labs, and band-width in recent years. The district is currently implementing the annual comprehensive needs assessment and Title I parent survey. These 2016 results and AdvancEd data will be compared with new data for continuous improvement action planning.

Report Summary

Scores By Section

Section Score

1	2	3	4

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics — 3.5

Sections
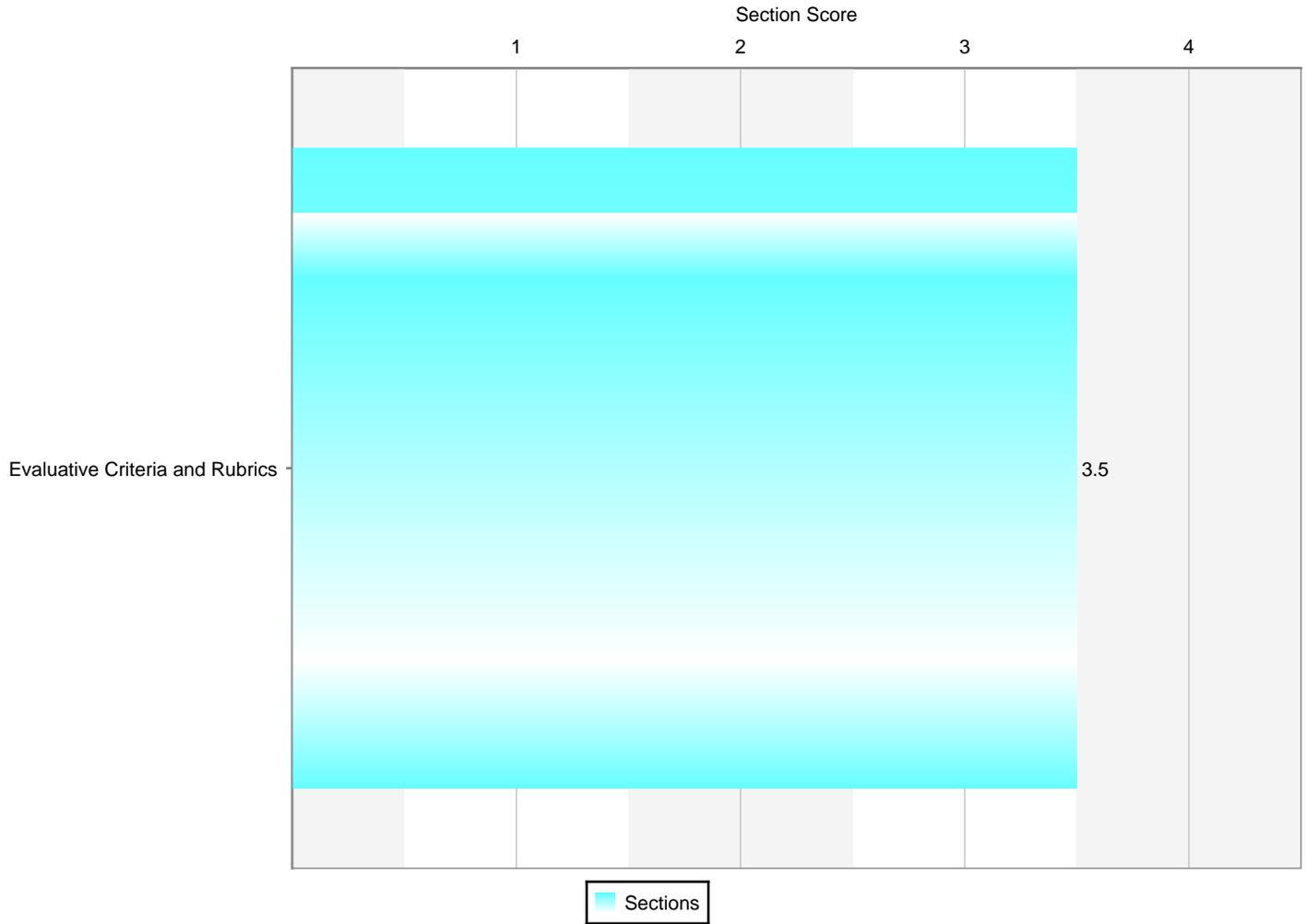
Student Performance Diagnostic

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?	No	Please find attached our data charts.	VCS Data Charts

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics

Overall Rating: 3.5

	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 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?

Georgia recently changed our state assessment to align with federal expectations for a more rigorous assessment that yields similar results as those derived from national assessments such as NAEP, ACT, and SAT. The new assessment, Georgia Milestones Assessment System, was first administered in 2014-2015. Based on the new statewide assessment, declining scores were seen in our district as well as statewide, although the scores are more consistent with student performance on national measures. A review of our trend data on previous assessments showed performance at or above state performance in English Language Arts across all grade levels. In Mathematics, steady gains were made and our students were performing at or above the state in elementary and middle grades. On the CCRPI (state-wide accountability index) our elementary and middle school index scores were above the state average.

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

On previous test data administered over multiple years, a positive trend in performance is evident on all measures. In particular, the district improved the percentage of students exceeding on the CRCT for ELA, Reading, and Mathematics. Gains on the percentage of students meeting grade level Lexile expectations also showed a positive trend over the past three years. The 4-year cohort graduation rate also shows a positive trend for all subgroups. A positive trend on CCRPI was noted for the middle and high school levels.

Which area(s) indicate the overall highest performance?

Student performance in ELA across all grade levels showed the highest performance in our district based on previous state assessment results (CRCT and EOCT); however, on the new assessment, Georgia Milestones, student performance in Mathematics in elementary and Social Studies in elementary and for US History showed the overall highest performance.

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

On the graduation rate, all subgroups are increasing in performance. The achievement gap between white and black subgroups is also closing in Mathematics.

Between which subgroups is the achievement gap closing?

The achievement gap is closing for students with disabilities in elementary grade levels based on CRCT. The black and white, and gender achievement gap is closing in mathematics.

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

When reviewing our system's performance on the new state assessments, results are aligned with how our students are performing on ACT, SAT, and AP. In addition, comparison of percentile ranks on universal screening data administered in grades K-8 with our performance on the new Georgia Milestones reveals that fewer students are proficient and on grade level in contrast to elevated proficiency ratings on the CRCT and EOCT.

Areas in Need of Improvement

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

On the Georgia Milestones our students performed below the state across all content areas and grade levels.

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

Prior to the Georgia Milestones, the only areas showing a flat trend were Science in grades 3, 4, and 6 and high school Mathematics.

Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest performance?

Our overall lowest performance on the Georgia Milestones is in English Language Arts and Science.

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

Based on the new Georgia Milestones, our Black and SWD students showed decreasing performance, especially in English Language Arts. Significant gender gaps were also evident in ELA.

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

This is difficult to forecast due to only having one year of data from the Georgia Milestones.

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

Our student's performance on the Georgia Milestones is consistent with findings from Universal Screening Results and national assessments such as ACT, SAT, and AP.

Report Summary

Scores By Section

Section Score

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Evaluative Criteria and Rubrics 3.5
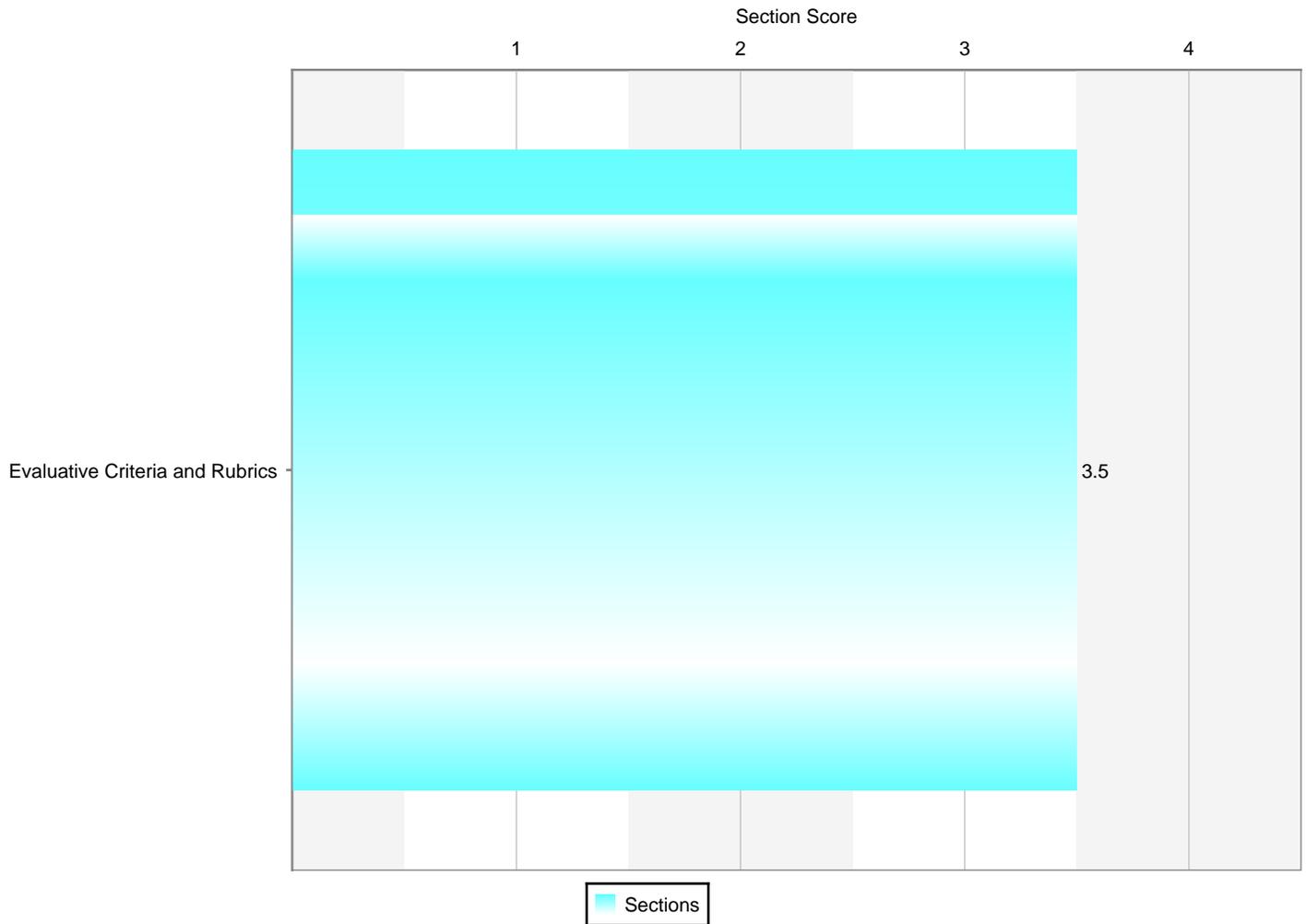
Sections

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		

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		VCS District SIP

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		QAR-VCS Cont Imp Cycle