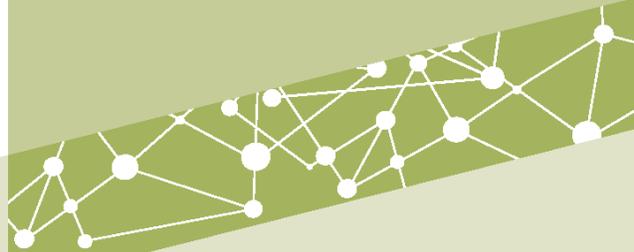


April 10-12, 2018



AdvancED® Engagement Review Report



AdvancED® Performance Accreditation

Results for:

Bismarck Public School District
806 North Washington Street
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

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Introduction

AdvancED Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

Accreditation is pivotal to leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research based standards, the accreditation process examines the whole institution—the program, the cultural context and the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of learners. Through the AdvancED Accreditation Process, highly skilled and trained Engagement Review Teams gather first-hand evidence and information pertinent to evaluating an institution’s performance against the research-based AdvancED Performance Standards. Using these Standards, Engagement Review Teams assess the quality of learning environments to gain valuable insights and target improvements in teaching and learning. AdvancED provides Standards that are tailored for all education providers so that the benefits of accreditation are universal across the education community.

Through a comprehensive review of evidence and information, our experts gain a broad understanding of institution quality. Using the Standards, the review team provides valuable feedback to institutions that helps to focus and guide each institution’s improvement journey. Valuable evidence and information from other stakeholders, including students, also is obtained through interviews, surveys and additional activities.

As a part of the Engagement Review, stakeholders were interviewed by members of the Engagement Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's learning environment and organizational effectiveness. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the Engagement Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Groups	Number
Board Members	3
Superintendent and Leadership Team	8
Building Administrators	25
Teachers	99
Staff Members	10
Students	93
Parents	49
Community Partners	12
Total	299

Once all of the information is compiled and reviewed, the team develops the Engagement Review Report and presents preliminary results to the institution. Results from the Engagement Review are reported in four ratings represented by colors. These ratings provide guidance and insight into an institution's continuous improvement efforts as described below:

Color	Rating	Description
Red	Needs Improvement	Identifies key areas that need more focused improvement efforts
Yellow	Emerging	Represents areas to enhance and extend current improvement efforts

Color	Rating	Description
Green	Meets Expectations	Pinpoints quality practices that meet the Standards
Blue	Exceeds Expectations	Demonstrates noteworthy practices producing clear results that exceed expectations

AdvancED Continuous Improvement System

The AdvancED Continuous Improvement System (CIS) provides a systemic fully integrated solution to help institutions map out and navigate a successful improvement journey. In the same manner that educators are expected to understand the unique needs of every learner and tailor the education experience to drive student success, every institution must be empowered to map out and embrace their unique improvement journey. AdvancED expects institutions to use the results and the analysis of data from various interwoven components for the implementation of improvement actions to drive education quality and improved student outcomes. While each improvement journey is unique, the journey is driven by key actions. AdvancED identifies three important components of a continuous improvement process and provides feedback on the components of the journey using a rubric that identifies the three areas to guide the improvement journey. The areas are as follows:

Commitment to Continuous Improvement	Rating
The institution has collected sufficient and quality data to identify school improvement needs.	Meets Expectations
Implications from the analysis of data have been identified and used for the development of key strategic goals.	Exceeds Expectations
The institution demonstrates the capacity to implement their continuous improvement journey.	Exceeds Expectations

Continuous Improvement Journey Narrative

Bismarck Public School District hosted an AdvancED Engagement Review April 9-12, 2018. The district serves more than 13,000 students. There are 13 elementary buildings, 3 middle schools, 3 comprehensive high schools and a College and Career Technical Center.

The District’s Mission and vision are: *"All students will have the academic, social, and personal skills to be college, career, and community ready. Vision: "Together, we inspire a passion for learning, discovery, and excellence."*

The Improvement Journey Presentation provided information on programmatic improvements with metrics that measure effectiveness. The district’s Strategic Plan focused on Five Rocks which included: 1) Data informed decision making, 2) Professional Learning Communities (PLC), 3) Multi-Tiered System of Supports (academic and behavior), 4) Standards Based Education, and 5) Project Based Learning.

The Improvement Journey Presentation provided information on programmatic improvements with metrics that measure effectiveness. Examples from the “Five Rocks” included data-informed decision-making occurring at every level in PLCs with data driving instruction, interventions, and professional development; Professional Learning Communities: Occurring at every school with PLC teams creating goals, revisiting data and outcomes to determine increase in achievement; Multi-Tiered System of Support: Occurring at every level with support for academics and behaviors using processes appropriate for grade level students; Standards-based education: Occurring at every level to some degree with elementary and middle grades fully integrating standards-based assessment and reporting. The high school levels align assessments to standards but communicate progress in grade form; Project Based Learning: Occurring at every level in some classrooms. Instructional coaches have been instrumental in building capacity by enhancing the skill-sets of teachers in innovative best practice.

Evidence of the scorecard developed by principals and instructional coaches to measure progress on the “Five

Rocks” initiative is a powerful tool to ensure systems are being measured to monitor progress and provide feedback. Evidence from administrator and teacher interviews indicated a strong commitment to the process of developing goals that support district improvement initiatives around the “Five Rocks.” In one building, walls were covered with such things as goals, progress monitoring graphs, and individual student progress, which all provided strong evidence of the staff's commitment to increasing student achievement.

The teacher evaluation process played a role in maintaining institutional effectiveness. Interviews with principals indicated the process of partnering with instructional coaches played a vital role in monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives such as, PLC's, Problem Based Learning, and Standards Based Grading. The use of instructional coaches and their close work with teachers and building principals provided an effective practice that ensured processes to measure organizational effectiveness are in place.

Interviews with parents indicated participation and involvement with Parent Teacher Organizations. Interviews with the superintendent and board members indicated various community forums being used to engage stakeholders regarding decisions on school boundaries, new facilities, and re-purposing elementary schools.

Interviews, review of artifacts and observations indicated that the system works to cultivate leadership in all staff members. Teachers indicated that they served on various leadership teams and committees and were invited to lead sessions during professional development opportunities. Various instructional coaches indicated that they had been teachers in the district before moving into their current role. Documentation of Climate and Culture surveys indicated a process where stakeholder perception data was collected. Bismarck Public School District’s web page provided survey data from individual schools for public review. Interviews with administrators, community partners, and parents indicated information had regularly been collected through community forums to study such things as referendums, boundary changes, facility plans, and school safety. Evidence indicated that leaders effectively collected and analyzed a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups.

All students were screened throughout the year to identify at-risk behaviors, providing adult and/or peers to apply interventions and support students, and monitor progress, adjusting intensity based on a student’s responsiveness. At the middle school level student and teacher interviews indicated they liked being part of a team. It allowed them to get to know one another and learn people's strengths and challenges. Students indicated they felt supported at school and enjoyed being there. Students also indicated there are many opportunities for leadership roles and a variety of groups/clubs to join. At the elementary level parents and students all indicated they felt safe at school and enjoyed being there. Students shared they like their teachers and have fun at school.

The District recently passed two bond issues to meet the needs of a growing student population. The community voted in support of the bond initiatives with voter approval over 80%. Committees that included representatives from all stakeholder groups were organized by the district to review key issues and make recommendations.

Interviews, review of artifacts, presentation and observations supported the allocation of resources in support of the system’s identified needs. Student performance was identified by stakeholders as a focus of all adults in the school system. During the leadership presentation, interviews with stakeholders, administrators and teachers, student performance was a focus of conversation.

Bismarck Public School System had a formal structure in place to identify district needs, included all stakeholders in decision-making process, and focused on the needs of all students. The “Five Rocks” identified in the strategic plan were imbedded in schools across the district. A culture of caring and support was evident to the AdvancED Engagement Review Team. A culture of learning across the district was evident in all observations, interviews and interactions during the engagement review. Technology was determined to be utilized to support a rigorous teaching and learning environment.

AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results

The AdvancED Performance Standards Diagnostic is used by the Engagement Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on AdvancED's Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of the three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity** and **Resource Capacity**. Point values are established within the diagnostic and a percentage of the points earned by the institution for each Standard is calculated from the point values for each Standard. Results are reported within four ranges identified by the colors representing Needs Improvement (Red), Emerging (Yellow), Meets Expectations (Green), and Exceeds Expectations (Blue). The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress toward its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to implement strategies that improve learner and educator performance.

Leadership Capacity Standards		Rating
1.1	The system commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners.	Emerging
1.2	Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the system's purpose and desired outcomes for learners.	Meets Expectations
1.3	The system engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.	Exceeds Expectations
1.4	The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support system effectiveness.	Emerging
1.5	The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.	Meets Expectations
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.	Meets Expectations
1.7	Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.	Meets Expectations
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the system's purpose and direction.	Emerging
1.9	The system provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.	Meets Expectations
1.10	Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.	Emerging
1.11	Leaders implement a quality assurance process for its institutions to ensure system effectiveness and consistency.	Meets Expectations

Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning is the primary expectation of every system and its institutions. The establishment of a learning culture built on high expectations for learning, along with quality programs and services, which include an analysis of results, are all key indicators of the system's impact on teaching and learning.

Learning Capacity Standards		Rating
2.1	Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the system.	Meets Expectations
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving.	Exceeds Expectations
2.3	The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs and skills needed for success.	Exceeds Expectations
2.4	The system has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers that support their educational experiences.	Meets Expectations
2.5	Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.	Exceeds Expectations
2.6	The system implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices.	Exceeds Expectations
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the system's learning expectations.	Exceeds Expectations
2.8	The system provides programs and services for learners' educational future and career planning.	Exceeds Expectations
2.9	The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners.	Exceeds Expectations
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.	Exceeds Expectations
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.	Exceeds Expectations
2.12	The system implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.	Exceeds Expectations

Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources align and support the needs of the system and institutions served. Systems ensure that resources are aligned with its stated purpose and direction and distributed equitably so that the needs of the system are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The system examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, and system effectiveness.

Resource Capacity Standards		Rating
3.1	The system plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the system's effectiveness.	Exceeds Expectations
3.2	The system's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.	Exceeds Expectations
3.3	The system provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.	Exceeds Expectations

Resource Capacity Standards		Rating
3.4	The system attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the system's purpose and direction.	Exceeds Expectations
3.5	The system integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.	Exceeds Expectations
3.6	The system provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the system.	Exceeds Expectations
3.7	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the system's purpose and direction.	Meets Expectations
3.8	The system allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the system's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.	Exceeds Expectations

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®)

Results

The eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) is a learner-centric classroom observation tool that comprises 28 items organized in seven environments aligned with the AdvancED Standards. The eleot provides useful, relevant, structured, and quantifiable data on the extent to which students are engaged in activities and/or demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and/or dispositions that are conducive to effective learning. Classroom observations are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes. Results from eleot are reported on a scale of one to four based on the degree and quality of the engagement.

eleot® Observations	
Total Number of eleot® Observations	
Environments	Rating
Equitable Learning Environment	3.34
Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs	3.12
Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	3.78
Learners are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner	3.68
Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions	2.80
High Expectations Environment	3.20
Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher	3.12
Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	3.39
Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work	2.86
Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	3.31
Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning	3.34
Supportive Learning Environment	3.52
Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful	3.53
Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	3.37

eleot® Observations	
Total Number of eleot® Observations	
Environments	Rating
Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks	3.54
Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher	3.64
Active Learning Environment	3.11
Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and the teacher predominate	3.14
Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences	2.93
Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities	3.51
Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments	2.85
Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	3.11
Learners monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored	2.95
Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work	3.29
Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content	3.31
Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed	2.90
Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.58
Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other	3.63
Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others	3.66
Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another	3.41
Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions	3.63
Digital Learning Environment	1.92
Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	2.14
Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	1.97
Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and/or work collaboratively for learning	1.64

eleot® Narrative

The AdvancED Engagement Review Team conducted 59 eleot observations during the Bismarck School District Engagement Review. The eleot® tool consists of seven Learning Environments, and each is scored using a four-point scale. The average score for all seven Environments was 3.16. The highest scores were 3.58 in the Well-Managed Learning Environment and 3.52 in the Supportive Learning Environment. The Digital Learning Environment scored a 1.92, which was the lowest score of all Environments.

During post-observation discussions, the team noted that classrooms exhibited supportive learning environments where students collaborated with their peers and learner interactions with teachers were seen as congenial and supportive. Student interviews revealed that students felt supported by members of the school staff, some of whom noted that support staff, administrators and coaches were also accessible when needed. Teachers were appreciative of supportive administrators but emphasized the need for building leaders to encourage risk taking and experimenting with new strategies.

The team also observed well-managed classrooms in which teachers and students interacted respectfully with one another. Classroom expectations were recognized and followed by students. Positive peer to peer, adult to

student, and adult to adult interactions were observed in all settings. Students transitioned from one learning activity to another with ease.

Regarding the Equitable Learning Environment, students had equal access to classroom activities, resources, and support based on observations, interviews, and artifacts. Data from eleot illustrated students were treated in a fair, consistent manner. Student interviews revealed students enjoy participating in hands-on, student led activities that demonstrate their understanding of the skills outlined in the standards. A multitude of resources were available for students to use in an effort to meet individual academic needs.

In the “High Expectation” Environment, the team observed students collaborating with students in group activities and teachers leading instruction with emphasis on building skills in areas that reflect identified learning standards. Rigorous learning activities that required higher-order thinking were embedded in instruction. Parents noted that teachers vary in their expectations for grading and the adherence to deadlines.

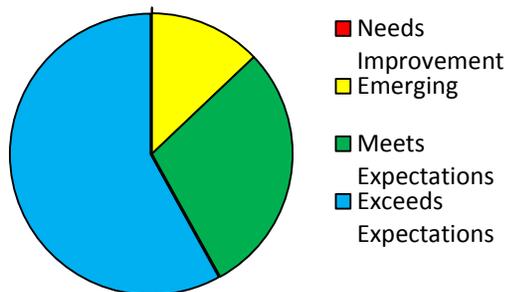
The Active Learning Environment findings resemble those in the High Expectations Environment. Students were observed engaging in project-based learning activities with clear objectives outlined to standards or provided with rubrics that reflect the knowledge and skills learners were expected to master.

In the Progress Monitoring Environment, the team observed students monitoring their own learning while also responding positively to teacher feedback. An emphasis on soft skills was observed in classrooms and discussed during interviews with staff and students. Additionally, teachers were committed to meeting the academic and behavioral goals for all students. Professional Learning Community teams met and discussed ways to intervene for students who were struggling with staff members providing student support and follow up.

While the Digital Learning Environment resulted in the lowest score, it is important to mention that using “digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning” received a score of 2.14 and was observed in elementary, middle and high school classrooms.

Findings

The chart below provides an overview of the institution ratings across the three Domains.



Rating	Number of Standards
Needs Improvement	0
Emerging	4
Meets Expectations	9
Exceeds Expectations	18

Powerful Practices

Powerful Practices reflect noteworthy observations and actions that have yielded clear results in student achievement or organizational effectiveness and are actions that exceed what is typically observed or expected in an institution.

Powerful Practice #1

The continuous efforts to implement and improve student learning by focusing diligently on each of the “Five Rocks” has developed into an integrated, cohesive, systemic, systematic, and articulated service to support growth and development for all students. (Standards 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, and 2.11)

Primary Standard: 2.11 Educators gather, analyze and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.

Evidence:

The leadership presentation, presented by the superintendent and leadership team outlined the district’s continuous improvement efforts on which all district stakeholders focused during the last five years. The following “Five Rocks” were presented: standards-based education standards, project-based learning, professional learning communities, multi-tier system of supports, and data-driven decision making. All “Five Rocks” were embedded in all areas of learning and teaching throughout the system. The continuous efforts to implement and improve student learning by focusing diligently on each of the “Five Rocks” has developed into an integrated, cohesive, systemic, systematic, and articulated service to support growth and development for all students. Evidence indicated learners, staff members, and parents see the “Five Rocks” as interdependent. Students achieving high expectations, tackling real-world issues, and developing an entrepreneurial spirit depend on meaningful measures of achievement and growth to inform the design and development of differentiated activities and experiences while allowing voice and choice for students to create and adapt in a personalized environment.

Bismarck Public School District’s “Five Rocks” outlined in the strategic plan are embedded throughout all schools, resulting in a systemic, systematic, cohesive, integrated system of services dedicated to support student and teacher growth and development. Teachers, students and parents communicated a common understanding of the standards-based education system.

Parents interviewed were pleased with the academic rigor in all areas of their student’s education and were appreciative of the communication sent home to keep them apprised of their progress. While appreciative of the high-level overview of criteria for meeting the standards, parents did find “scoring” of the standards difficult to understand, however, admitted that both district and school leadership provided multiple opportunities for parents to learn and ask questions. The AdvancED Engagement Review Team found that teachers were focused on integrating project-based learning into the curricula. Observations in classrooms revealed group and student-led activities were prominent in learning environments, particularly at the elementary level. Students interviewed emphasized experiencing a love of learning in their respective schools, especially when they engaged in “Genius Hour” or other project-based, student-led learning activities in which they chose the activity aligned with school improvement goals. Teachers participated in professional learning communities using the DuFour model as a standard. During interviews with teachers and administrators, the team found that teachers created goals based on student performance data to make decisions that guide instruction. The team also found evidence of multiple layers of academic and behavioral supports in place to assist all students. Data are used at every level to drive improvement and evaluate programs.

Powerful Practice #2

Instructional coaches are instrumental in building capacity by enhancing the skill-set of teachers in innovative best practices. (Standard 3.3)

Primary Standard 3.3 The system provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Evidence:

Instructional coaches are available to all staff members in all buildings. Coaches collaborate with teachers during PLCs to ensure teachers have what they need to improve student engagement and achievement. Review of artifacts, interviews and presentations indicated that Instructional Coaches provide individual professional learning to PLC groups giving teachers “voice and choice.” The coaches support teachers and build capacity within the district by providing feedback on lessons taught, presenting individual professional learning opportunities and sharing classroom management strategies. Coaches work with teachers to analyze student data, which drives instruction and continually improves student achievement at all levels.

The district employs approximately 24 instructional coaches who build capacity within the district by collaborating with teachers and administrators, modeling for teachers and providing teachers with meaningful feedback to ensure student achievement. Teachers participate in professional learning opportunities throughout the year provided by the district. Buildings also provide personalized professional learning opportunities for staff members. Proposals are submitted for professional learning opportunities to be approved. Evaluation surveys are completed after professional learning opportunities and the data are collected and maintained by the district.

The building leaders practice of developing an "agreement document" with instructional coaches each year was found to be a positive strategy that ensured a quality assurance process is in place that outlined action items and set clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of the instructional coaches and principals.

Opportunities for Improvement

Opportunities for Improvement are those actions that will guide and direct institutions to specific areas that are worthy of additional attention.

Opportunity for Improvement #1

Establish practices and procedures that support the governing body’s ongoing implementation of the coherent governance model. (Standards 1.4)

Primary Standard: 1.4

Evidence:

Board Interviews indicated that the coherent governance model was researched by governing board leaders and all board members participated in training prior to adoption of the model. Interviews indicated there was a desire to define the roles of the day-to-day school leaders and the governing body.

The governing authority's recent implementation of the Coherent Governance model indicates a willingness to take steps that fosters adherence to policies and procedures that support system effectiveness. Interviews, observations and review of artifacts indicated the board has taken part in Coherent Governance training. Evidence gathered from stakeholder interviews and review of artifacts indicated concerns that the governing body was not always holding itself accountable to its own policies. Interviews with teachers indicated concern that new governance and leadership could affect the progress they have made on the “Five Rocks.”

Improvement Priorities

Improvement priorities are developed to enhance the capacity of the institution to reach a higher level of performance and reflect the areas identified by the Engagement Review Team to have the greatest impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Improvement Priority #1

Develop a formalized plan to regularly review and revise the system’s mission and vision that involves all stakeholder groups. (Standards 1.1 and 1.8)

Primary Standard: 1.1, 1.8

Evidence:

Observations and review of artifacts indicated the governing body's commitment to starting every board meeting by reading aloud the district's mission and vision statements. Interviews with the governing body and stakeholders indicated a real commitment to their purpose statement and a focus on student achievement. During interviews the phrase "student achievement" was heard numerous times.

System Quality Factors (SQF) scores in the area of Clear Direction recognized a need for the governing authority to implement a collaborative process with stakeholder groups to review and revise the strategic direction of the system. Evidence was gathered through multiple stakeholder interviews indicating a lack of their participation in the ongoing review of the system’s mission and vision.

Minimal evidence was presented that the district has a formal process to review and revise the district’s mission and vision regularly. Stakeholder interviews indicated minimal involvement in the process of reviewing and revising the district’s mission and vision statements. The district currently has a vision and mission that is supported and implemented. A formal process to review and revise the mission and vision with input from all stakeholder groups ensures that the mission and vision are always current and meeting the needs of a growing school system.

Accreditation Recommendation and Index of Educational Quality™ (IEQ™)

The Engagement Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the institution earns the distinction of accreditation for a five-year term. AdvancED will review the results of the Engagement Review to make a final determination, including the appropriate next steps for the institution in response to these findings.

AdvancED provides the Index of Education Quality™ (IEQ™) as a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus. The IEQ is comprised of the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: 1) Leadership Capacity; 2) Learning Capacity; and 3) Resource Capacity and the results of eleot classroom observations. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provides information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria.

Institution IEQ	358.52
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Conclusion Narrative

Bismarck Public School District leadership guided all stakeholders in the discussion and improvement of student learning. All stakeholder interviews had a focus on meeting the needs of all students within the school system. There was an emphasis on soft skills, communication and collaboration across all grade levels. The use of instructional coaches to build capacity to ensure quality instruction in every classroom every day benefits all students. Teacher and principal interviews indicated an appreciation for the district's commitment to providing instructional coaches to improve student learning at every grade level and throughout the school system.

Review of artifacts, interviews and presentations indicated the use of Charlotte Danielson's model for evaluations and professional practice is a research-based approach that effectively provided a framework for the supervision and evaluation throughout the district. The feedback gathered from building principals and teachers provided strong evidence that the use of the instructional coaches was a vital component to improving professional practice. The focus on enhancing the effectiveness of the Professional Learning Communities and instructional strategies played a strong role in fostering collaboration practices that were centered on increasing student achievement.

The Improvement Journey Presentation by the superintendent and leadership team addressed district priorities that emphasized instruction to enhance students' critical thinking and innovative skills. In the climate and culture elementary school survey, 79% of students identified the phrase "listen to teachers," 58% of students identified the word "think," and 51% identified the phrase "work with others" as things you most often do while in class at school. Results of the climate and culture secondary school survey reflected 5% of students identified the phrase "what are you thinking" and 14% of students identified the phrase "explain it" as things you most often hear while in class at school.

School leadership interviews in the elementary schools outlined PLC goals for each grade level in ELA and mathematics, being deliberate with the aggregation of data to inform decisions that promoted student achievement. Sunrise Elementary teachers post on pennants outside their classroom: "Class of 20??," which emphasized the district mission: "All students will have the academic, social, and personal skills to be career, college, and community ready." Many programs across the district promoted success for all students.

Students said in interviews "I know I am learning when I am challenged with more difficult problems and tasks." In classroom observations and interviews, students saw mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow. Students were engaged in instruction at the elementary levels that reflected the school's vision and district mission. Project-based learning was observed in elementary classrooms. Genius Hour was an example of student-centered, project-based learning. Students select their learning goal, research topic, and created a product that demonstrated their understanding.

Eighth grade students indicated they attended a Career Education class which helped them make decisions about options for future careers and what classes would be helpful for them to take during high school. They also discussed the Junior Achievement program at the elementary level which brought in business members from the community to share information on different careers and entrepreneurship.

Bismarck Public School's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)-a framework for the School Improvement Process included multiple resources for providing assistance to students to address learning needs. Teacher interviews indicated Professional Learning Community teams created goals that addressed the learning needs of all students using a multi-tiered approach. School counselors were "housed" in every school, providing social-emotional learning opportunities for students in elementary schools.

Observations/teacher interviews/instructional coaches interviews, and student interviews indicated that formative assessment of knowledge and skills occurred daily. Summative assessment data or culminating activities

informed teaching and learning, measuring students' knowledge and skill level for specific standards, determining the necessity of interventions. The practice of DuFour's PLC model was implemented at all grade levels with fidelity. Data were used to create goals, revise and/or differentiate learning, measure learning outcomes and determine effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Classroom observations in the middle school indicated that students were using formative and summative assessments regularly. Students recognized their level of understanding and achievement through their own self-assessment of formative assessments. Interviews with students indicated that they clearly understood how their work was assessed and what they had to do to improve.

Weekly grade level and content area Professional Learning Communities occurred as well as monthly Professional Learning Communities for fine arts, Title I and Library Media Specialists. Teachers used student data to drive instruction. Teachers grouped students using a flexible grouping model, changing groups frequently to ensure students were receiving instruction at their level. Progress monitoring occurred often and adjustments in groups were made accordingly.

New teachers were provided with the opportunity to meet with district leadership and learn policy and procedures, and review and discuss curriculum, before school starts. The district also offered time throughout the school year to reconnect with new teachers. Instructional coaches were available to all staff members. Coaches collaborated with building administrators and PLC groups as well as provided professional learning opportunities for teachers to help guide the improvement of student engagement. Instructional Coaches were a part of the teaching and learning process in every building supporting the development of quality instruction in every classroom, every day.

One high school had a 1:1 initiative. Plans are in place for the other two high schools to implement a 1:1 initiative at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. The middle schools had a 1:1 initiative within the school. The elementary schools had a 2:1 initiative. Teacher devices were replaced every three years with student devices were replaced every four years. The school board approved a reoccurring budget for maintaining and updating technology across the district. Technology was embedded within instruction and project-based learning opportunities. It was used to support teaching and learning for all students.

PowerSchool was available for parents to monitor their student's grades and progress. The district technology department included technology experts that developed and maintained information systems. Observations and the review of artifacts revealed a variety of instructional resources to support curriculum and instruction.

During the past few school years the District passed two bond issues to meet the needs of a growing student population. The community voted in support of the bond initiatives with voter approval over 80%. Committees that included representatives from all stakeholder groups were organized by the district to review key issues and make recommendations.

School Board and leadership interviews and presentations reflected a commitment to the students, parents, and staff members of Bismarck Public Schools. The community partner interviews and parent interviews indicated a trust in the district leadership at all levels and a commitment to the success for all students. The Engagement Review Team commends Bismarck Public School District for their commitment to the continuous improvement process. With changing demographics district leaders identified key strategies that focused on student learning and engaged district stakeholders in a conversation and commitment to achieving success for all students.

Next Steps

The results of the Engagement Review provide the next step to guide the improvement journey of the institution in their efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Accreditation Engagement Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on their current improvement efforts and to adapt and adjust their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

Upon receiving the Accreditation Engagement Review Report the institution is encouraged to implement the following steps:

- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Develop plans to address the Improvement Priorities identified by the Engagement Review Team.
- Use the findings and data from the report to guide and strengthen the institution’s continuous improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report
- Continue your Improvement Journey

Team Roster

The Engagement Review Teams are comprised of professionals with varied backgrounds and professional experiences. All Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members complete AdvancED training and eleot® certification to provide knowledge and understanding of the AdvancED tools and processes. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Mrs. Jessica Gregerson	Jessica Gregerson is a middle school math teacher at Valley City Junior High School in Valley City, ND. She is currently in her 8th year of teaching and has also taught middle school science, high school math, biology, AP Biology and physics. Jessica also currently serves as a PLC leader and as a member of her school’s MTSS Leadership Team. She holds Bachelor of Science degrees in Mathematics, Biology and Middle Level Education and a Master of Education degree from the University of North Dakota.
Mr. James Hardman	Mr. Hardman serves as Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the 8,700 students attending the Crown Point Community School Corporation in Crown Point, Indiana. Prior to his service in the position, professional experiences include teacher of secondary mathematics, Assistant Principal and Principal. He has served on several AdvancED Engagement Reviews and leads the continuous improvement process for his home school corporation.

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Dr. Lori Franke-Hopkins	<p>Dr. Lori Franke-Hopkins serves as the Director of Illinois for AdvancED. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Speech Communication, Master of Science in Secondary English Education, Education Specialist in School Administration, and concluded her educational path at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, earning a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Dr. Hopkins served as a military police officer in the United States Marine Corps. She taught English, speech, and drama at Carrollton High School, coordinated the testing program at SIUE, directed teacher education and clinical placements at Blackburn College, and served in several administrative positions in the Jersey CUSD No. 100 school district, concluding her tenure as superintendent. She is the author of <i>Transforming District Office Culture One Strategy at a Time</i> and recently released a children's book: <i>I Want to be Just Me</i> that encompasses the idea that each child is unique and has the ability to change the world.</p>
Mrs. Heather Opland	<p>Heather Opland is the Special Education Director for Minot Public Schools. In that position, she is responsible for all facets of the special education department including overseeing special education programs, services, personnel and budget. She also oversees and collaborates with a team of special education coordinators, school psychologists and occupational therapists. Heather has a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with a minor in Child Development and Family Science, a Master of Science in Special Education and has completed all coursework for a Master of Arts in Autism Spectrum Disorders. She has experience working as a sixth grade teacher, special education teacher working with students with emotional disabilities, intellectual disabilities, Autism and learning disabilities and is currently an administrator.</p>
Mr. Sean Safranski	<p>Sean Safranski is an Assistant Principal at Davies High School in Fargo, North Dakota. In his 19 years of experience working in education he served five years as an 8th grade Earth Science teacher in West Fargo, served as the principal of Sullivan Middle School and Shanley High School of the Fargo Catholic Schools Network, and five years in his current position at Davies High School. In his current position he also serves as the chairperson for the Fargo Public School's School Improvement Committee. He has served on several AdvancED Engagement Reviews the past 8 years and has had the opportunity to serve as the lead evaluator on a number of those visits.</p>
Dr. Tina Woolsey Lead Evaluator	<p>Dr. Tina Woolsey served as an educator in the Missouri Public School System for over twenty years. She has experience as a classroom teacher, building principal, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, and superintendent of schools. Dr. Woolsey received her Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Saint Louis University. She also holds a Specialist in Education and Master of Science in Educational Administration from Missouri State University. Dr. Woolsey currently serves as the AdvancED School Quality Specialist for Missouri where she works with school leaders in pursuit of a world of opportunities for all learners.</p>



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About AdvancED

AdvancED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization serving the largest community of education professionals in the world. Founded on more than 100 years of work in continuous improvement, AdvancED combines the knowledge and expertise of a research institute, the skills of a management consulting firm and the passion of a grassroots movement for educational change to empower Pre-K-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.

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