



# **Report of the Quality Assurance Review Team for Calcasieu Parish Public Schools**

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AdvancED is the parent organization of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE). NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

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# About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

## Background

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

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

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

## The Accreditation Process

To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, school districts and their schools must:

- 1) Meet the AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems.** School districts demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.
- 2) Engage in continuous improvement.** School districts and their schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose that the school district is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school and district effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).
- 3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** School districts and schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, school districts host an external quality assurance review team once every five years. The team evaluates the school district's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school district's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and recommendations to help the school district improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school district and a written report detailing the team's recommendations. The school district acts on the team's recommendations and submits a progress report two years following the review.

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

# Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

## Purpose

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

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

A key aim of the quality assurance review is to verify that the school district is operating with institutional integrity – that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students and other stakeholders.

## School District Preparation

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

## Summary of Team Activities

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

## Using the Report – Acting on the Recommendations

The school district uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school district is held accountable for addressing the recommendations identified in the report. The AdvancED State Office is available to assist the school district in addressing the recommendations. Two years following the Quality Assurance Review Team visit, the school district must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress it has made on the team's recommendations. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school district is addressing the recommendations.

## Accreditation Recommendation

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

## Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), a division of AdvancED, visited Calcasieu Parish Schools on October 12-15, 2008.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed: 219 administrators, 161 teachers, 24 support staff, 182 parents and business partners, 171 students and 10 Board of Education members for a total of 767 stakeholders. In addition to meeting with district personnel and stakeholders, the team visited 14 schools within the school district. During the school visits, team members interviewed school stakeholders, observed 94 randomly selected classrooms, and reviewed relevant school artifacts.

Classroom visits were conducted by members of the Quality Assurance Review Team members. Team members randomly visited 126 classrooms throughout the school system. During these visits, team members sought during the classroom visits to view teaching and learning in action and to corroborate information obtained from interviews and artifacts. The classroom visits revealed the following data:

<b>Students and Their Performance</b>	<b>% Evident or Fully Evident</b>
<b>Students are actively engaged in learning.</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Interactions between students and teachers contribute to student learning.</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Students use a variety of thinking and reflective skills.</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>Students have an opportunity to demonstrate their learning.</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Classroom Practices</b>	
<b>Students are challenged to meet high expectations.</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Instruction is adapted to meet student's individual needs.</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>A variety of instructional delivery methods are used (e.g. technology).</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>All students are treated with respect.</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>Classroom Context</b>	
<b>The classroom provides a safe and physically comfortable environment.</b>	<b>98%</b>
<b>Instructional time in the classroom is maximized.</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>There is a positive learning climate.</b>	<b>97%</b>

Throughout the visit, the team reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the district. Specifically, the team examined the district’s systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

- Vision and Purpose
- Governance and Leadership
- Teaching and Learning
- Documenting and Using Results
- Resource and Support Systems
- Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
- Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The Quality Assurance Review Team used the standards to guide its review of the school district, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school district and its schools function as a whole and embody the practices and characteristics of a quality school district. Through its examination of the school district’s adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review Team prepared reports on each standard, highlighting strengths and suggestions for improvement specific to each standard. These reports can be found following this summary.

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

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

## Commendations

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

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the Calcasieu Parish Schools for:

1. **Establishing a coherent and clear theme regarding the purpose and direction of the school system.** As evidenced by statements from stakeholder interviews, school visits, and classroom observations, all stakeholders know the district’s focus, understand the intent and application of the theme “All Children are Important to Us” and can articulate how it applies to their area of work and responsibilities. Establishing a clear direction that is understood by stakeholders and committed to by all is a critical attribute of the conditions necessary for improvement.
2. **Demonstrating a commitment to student success through a variety of programs and services as well as helping students take ownership for their learning.** The school system provides programs and services dedicated to helping students achieve success in their learning. (e.g. Quality Binders, Ninth Grade Academy, student led conferences) The school system is

committed to providing opportunities and seeking solutions that support the needs of every student. This commitment is aligned and supportive of the purpose and direction established by the school system as well as reflective the promise and commitment made to stakeholders. Providing a variety and diverse offerings of programs and services lets each and every student know that their success in reaching their potential is important and will be supported.

3. **Enacting strategies and resources to provide a variety of means of communicating with stakeholders.** The school system serves a diverse population of families and communities. The system recognizes the need to provide a variety of mediums (e.g., Connect-Ed, good media relations, web sites, SHARE, newsletters, Blackboard) to communicate with each family and the community at large. Communication is an essential element to ensuring that parents, students, and stakeholders can mutually support every student's endeavor to learn and succeed. The system enacts effective strategies to communicate outwardly. However the school system must monitor and ensure that communication efforts result is responsive and two-way.
4. **Using data to inform instruction and improve student learning.** As evidenced by statements from stakeholder interviews, school visits, reviews of artifacts, and classroom observations, the school system demonstrated a determined and persistent focus on the use of data to guide instruction and monitor student learning. (e.g. SCANTRON, state generated test data, stakeholder perception surveys) The uses of student achievement data as well as perception data are effective strategies necessary to facilitate the learning process and monitor student success.
5. **Nurturing positive relationships with stakeholders in support of the school system.** Throughout the visit there was significant evidence that the school system is very effective at establishing healthy and productive relationships with stakeholders. (e.g., law enforcement agencies, Partners in Education, local based Service Agencies, City Council, business owners) Strong, positive relationships between the school system and community lead to active and sustainable support that benefits student learning.
6. **Committing resources to making available technology and providing the support for its use including the expectation of training staff prior.** The school system has a well-deserved reputation for providing technology resources and the support to ensure that the technology is and can be used to enhance student learning. The school system's policy and practice to provide training to staff before deployment of technology has enhanced and supported effective use.

## Recommendations

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

1. **Expand the capacity of the instructional staff at the school level to identify, execute, and monitor the impact of research-based strategies for improving student learning.** School plans were reviewed by the team and discussed during the school visits. The strategies in the plans mostly reflect current practices. There is little or no evidence to support whether instructional strategies in the improvement plans have worked or are working. There is also no formal mechanism by which proven strategies are implemented across the district. The plans need to have greater clarity of purpose and direction. The plans need to include strategies for improvement rather than describing current instructional practices.
2. **Develop, integrate, and monitor metrics of success of quality school systems that include comparative data beyond the Louisiana State Accountability system and results.** The school system places significant emphasis on the Louisiana State Accountability results. Although this is essential and regulated by law the school system would benefit from maintaining such emphasis as well as identifying benchmarks that challenge students who exceed the expectations established by the state of Louisiana. There is significant pride throughout the school system of the success within the state of Louisiana however such success should not be viewed as a ceiling but rather a beginning point for future improvement. The system would benefit from benchmarking its achievement levels against school systems of similar demographics and size throughout the nation. The school system should seek multiple and diverse methods of student achievement data to ensure that students at all levels are being challenged and making progress.
3. **Enact strategies to improve student participation and access to learning opportunities available through Career and Technical programs and at Lake Charles Boston Academy.** During the visit, it was noted that a significant percentage of students in Calcasieu Parish will not go onto or complete a four-year college degree program. There is a significant part of the student population that is successfully graduating from high school but has not had the benefit of career and/or academic planning aligned with their interests, skills, and aptitudes. This is not uncommon in school systems of this size and diversity. Expansion and enrollment of career and technical programs along with other initiatives to serve this population of students could provide the necessary support and direction for students in their career and academic planning.
4. **Implement a formal and continuous program evaluation at all levels to identify, extend, and sustain best practices that support student achievement.** The school system should establish system-wide processes for the ongoing analysis and use of data, including achievement data, to inform instruction and improvement efforts. While the team found evidence of the use of student performance data to make decisions, it was uneven and sporadic. The team did not find clear evidence of a district-wide process to support and monitor the effective use of data to make instructional decisions regarding what practices are working. Additionally, there was little evidence of the school system extending successful practices across the district. A system-wide process will ensure that the results of improvement efforts are considered and used to inform the decision making process at the district and school level regarding instruction and improvement efforts.

## **Next Steps**

The school district should:

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

## **Resources**

AdvancED offers a range of resources to support your school district as it acts on the findings in this report. The AdvancED Research and Development division provides online resources, research, handbooks, and tools to assist school districts and their schools with continuous improvement. In addition, your state office provides hands-on professional development and ongoing technical assistance. Contact your state office for assistance in accessing these resources.

## **Celebrating Accreditation**

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

## **Summary**

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

## Standard Reports

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

## Vision and Purpose

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

*Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a purpose and direction that is shared system-wide. The leadership establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the system's vision that is supported by system and school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and district effectiveness. The system's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.*

### Description

The vision, mission, and focus areas (goals) give direction to all stakeholders throughout the Calcasieu Parish School System. A broad cross-section of Calcasieu Parish stakeholders were involved with the creation of both the District's vision and four focus areas that include Stakeholder Satisfaction; High Academic Achievement; Safe, Productive Environment; and Operational Efficiency. A visioning process was applied during a facilitated session that involved over 80 stakeholders (including university personnel, industry and business leaders, teachers and administrators, and banking representatives). This committee met for a one-day meeting where the Quality Process (based on the Balridge Model) was used to examine continuous improvement within the parish school system, to develop the current vision and purpose, and establish the district's four focus areas. Interviews with staff members, students, community representatives and parents revealed knowledge and support of the Calcasieu Parish School System's vision. With increasing numbers of stakeholders becoming involved in the Quality process, there is an assurance that everyone has an opportunity to have a voice in setting defined expectations for Calcasieu Public Schools.

Interviews provided strong evidence that the system's vision and purpose have been communicated to stakeholders, building understanding and support. Annual and Quarterly reports disseminated throughout Calcasieu's Parish, using both electronic and mailing methods, have brought support from community stakeholders. Local government and industry have used these documents to recruit businesses to this area. Every six weeks, curriculum reports are brought to the Superintendent and District Leaders for review. With reports going to administration and, in turn, administration publishing reports, it is apparent that the sharing of information goes both ways. Data has been analyzed to refine

the continuous improvement model, building ownership among the stakeholders. Interviews also indicated that communication methods included student-to-parent communication of the vision. The documents related to the vision and purposes are not readily available in different languages, this strategy could assist in the growth of support from non-English speaking families in the Parish.

Each school has a hybrid of the district's dashboard that is specific to individual buildings and their needs. Students, teachers and leadership at each school are involved with a vision and mission statement process. Continuous improvement is visible in the action plans specific to goal statements. Many of the goals have been revised and aligned with SCANTRON data that is regularly analyzed. District review of each building's mission statement and goals has been a driving force across the parish. Support from the stakeholders toward the vision has also been apparent. Community members have embraced "All Children are Important" through financial contributions and volunteerism (i.e., the groundwork visible on each campus).

All buildings in the Calcasieu Parish School System maintain an annual profile based on completion of the School Improvement Plan template provided by the State of Louisiana's Department of Education. This document is unique to each of the schools. In addition, the School System's Quality Department synthesizes the information from the schools into an Annual Report that is published for review by all Stakeholders. Each school has an annual School Report Card compiled from data submitted to the State. This document is available online and is shared in the form of brochures that can be distributed to parents, patrons, and visitors upon request. Every school has a liaison that electronically submits information and data to the Quality Department who on a quarterly basis selects news elements to be sent electronically to business partners and parish patrons to inform and to strengthen support for the parish and schools.

The Dashboards that are evident in each school, district department and program, are used to align teaching and learning and the strategic direction of schools with the overall vision and purpose of the Calcasieu Parish School System. The Dashboard provided a structure to which district personnel consistently referred to during interviews. It was stated numerous times that the Dashboard, containing the district vision, served as a decision screener and provided a systemic connection between District expectations and School Improvement Plans. However, some of the Individual School Improvement Plans that were reviewed showed direct alignment with the State template rather than deliberate alignment with the District's vision and purpose.

Interviews and School Improvement Plans clearly indicate the current vision and purpose are driving all systems; however, consistent attention to vision and purpose are needed if they are to remain vibrant and motivating. Contained within the Dashboard belonging to the Quality Department, there is an assigned responsibility to maintain a process to review the vision and purpose of the Calcasieu Parish School System. This process was applied with 80 stakeholders who met to review quality within the parish school system and develop the current vision and purpose. The resulting vision, "All Children are Important to Us," was committed to by all participants representing the parish citizens. Currently much pride is expressed in this vision and the commitment that the school system has made to bring the vision to fruition.

### **Strengths**

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Communication of the District's vision and purpose to all stakeholders is clearly evident and is passionately and proudly embraced by multiple stakeholders.

- Displaying system wide goals through the Dashboard Model has provided an easily understood message for all stakeholders.
- The vision has established a common language for all stakeholders and is clearly imbedded in the district’s actions that have resulted in continuous improvement.
- Use of technology to disseminate the vision and purpose to stakeholders is effective.

**Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement**

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Communicating the vision and purposes of the district in multiple languages will serve the growing population of non-English speaking families.
- Expanding the number and categories of stakeholders involved in regularly scheduled reviews of the vision should build buy-in from the community.
- Computer access for some stakeholders may be limited. More mailings and physical posting is suggested.
- The use of dashboards should be expanded into individual classrooms in all locations.

**Finding**

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational** indicating that the Calcasieu Parish Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Vision and Purpose standard.

**Governance and Leadership**

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

*Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the system’s vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders function with clearly defined authority and responsibility and encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for system and school improvement among stakeholders. The system’s policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.*

**Description**

The Calcasieu Parish School System is governed by a fifteen (15) member Board of Education which adopts policies and appoints the superintendent. Members are elected for a four-year term and represent various districts throughout the parish. The Board has an orientation at the beginning of each term and annual retreats to aid the members in better understanding the roles and responsibilities of the School Board. Attendance by Board members at the Louisiana School Boards Association and National School Boards Association conferences further exhibits the efforts of Board members to expand their collective knowledge and grow professionally. In interviews with Board members, it was evident that the Board is committed to providing direction and resources to support the efforts of the district and its schools.

Several board members of the Calcasieu Parish School System have been officers on the state school board association. This exposure provides a broad-based knowledge of effective board operations. It

was evident through various interviews that school and community stakeholders perceive the support of their Board members as a strength in their school improvement efforts. The Board plans for fiscal improvements and financing capital programs and informs the public about system issues. The Board receives curriculum and financial reports from the administration and central office personnel on a regular basis. The Board holds regularly scheduled meetings on the first Tuesday of each month that are open to the public and that allow for public comment so that stakeholders can voice opinions and/or concerns. The School Board and district retain the services of legal counsel from the District Attorney's office to help ensure that federal, state, and district legal requirements are met. Legal counsel is present at all Board meetings.

A review of artifacts disclosed a district organizational chart, policy manual, personnel manual, teacher evaluation plan, and maintenance of adequate insurance coverage. Through prudent financial management, the Board provides human and material resources that support the district's vision and mission while retaining a minimum eight percent (8%) reserve.

The Superintendent directs all operations of the school system and ensures that policies of the Board are implemented. The superintendent is supported by Central Office staff, administrators, teachers, and support staff who are highly capable and dedicated to providing a quality education and safe environment for all students within the system.

The district has committed to Balridge/Total Quality and provides quality training to groups and individuals on the process. At the school level, a range exists in the degree of implementation of the Quality Process. This variance results in a lack of uniformity and consistency among the schools within the district.

A district-wide improvement plan was developed collaboratively with input from school and community stakeholders. The plan includes an analysis of data and strategies for increasing student performance. There is a sincere commitment to student achievement throughout the district to achieve the district's vision and mission. As the Superintendent passionately stated, "Everybody can learn, and children are very important". There is a strong sense of mutual trust throughout the entire district as evidenced by the NSSE survey results, support of bond issues, avenues for communication, and partnerships with business and community organizations.

Although the school district provides for collaboration among stakeholders and considers their input, it appears that some policies that directly affect the schools may be established without input from those that are most directly impacted by the decision.

### **Strengths**

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The School Board and Superintendent model the districts' vision, "All children are important to us", and the mission, "To provide a quality education for all students".
- The School Board governs in such a way that they are policy makers and enforcers rather than active participants in the daily operations of the school district.
- The district has established four focus areas (as presented on the Dashboard: Stakeholder Satisfaction; High Academic Achievement; Safe, Productive Environment; Operational Efficiency) that serve as the driving force for aligning all schools.

## Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Efforts should be made to seek stakeholder input from those who are most impacted by changes to and implementation of district policies (e.g., Student Code of Conduct).
- Efforts should be made to increase the commitment to the Quality Process and to providing a more structured approach to implementation across all levels.

## Finding

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of Operational, indicating that the Calcasieu Parish Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Governance and Leadership standard.

## Teaching and Learning

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

*Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The system ensures that teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process; provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations; and give students feedback to improve their performance.*

## Description

The Calcasieu Parish Public School System utilizes the Louisiana Department of Education designed Comprehensive Curriculum for all core subject areas. The State's curriculum is based on clearly defined expectations for student learning which are outlined in Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Grade Level Expectations (GLE's.) The Comprehensive Curriculum is the basis for the State's testing program and accountability initiative. The district has provided professional development to align the curriculum with adopted resources. Many teacher leaders and consultants have served as writers and reviewers at the state level and continue to serve as a resource in the full and effective implementation of the Comprehensive Curriculum. Through collaborative efforts within schools and across the district, teachers and instructional leaders have designed units and lessons to promote the foundation skills. Use of the State curriculum provides consistency for Calcasieu's mobile and transient student population.

The curriculum is provided online through the Louisiana Department of Education website and can be accessed by all teachers from school or home. The school system's strong commitment to technology allows all teachers the necessary tools to fully utilize the curriculum's classroom activities which assist students in meeting expectations and to assessments which measure student progress toward those goals. Additional professional development is delivered through Blackboard postings, discussion groups and courses. Further support is provided during job-embedded sessions as determined by site-based needs assessment. Teachers' daily schedules reflect time to collaborate with colleagues across the grade and curriculum areas. District personnel provide resources and materials for improvement initiatives and additional requests for support are readily available from the system.

Aligned with the district theme, *All Children Are Important*, each school is charged with careful review of their trend data to develop improvement goals. Representatives from each school's improvement planning committee attend parish led meetings to analyze and use data to revise the School

Improvement Plan on a yearly basis. The district provides support to schools in selecting research based strategies while allowing for the diversity of each community based school. Schools and teachers are beginning to utilize student achievement data from the newly implemented SCANTRON assessments in combination with state assessments to make instructional decisions.

The system has sought ways to allocate and protect instructional time to support student learning. Field trip policy was revisited and modified to assure that trips are relevant to the curriculum and support instruction. Some schools have added time to the school day while others have piloted summer programs to provide additional instruction in schools with high risk populations.

District high school leaders realize the need to focus on preparing college-bound students while producing a strong workforce for the community. The district has increased the number of Advanced Placement courses and offers dual enrollment for coursework through McNeese University. Concurrently, programs are being developed or enhanced to reduce the high drop-out rate and the excessive number of course failures. Initiatives include establishment of Ninth Grade Academies, Credit Recovery, expanded course offerings which result in diploma Academic Endorsements, Career and Technical Education Endorsements, Industry Based Certifications as well as access to career planning tools and graduation coaches. Lake Charles-Boston Academy was designed for all students to add relevance to the rigor of the high school curriculum by providing work force development as well as advanced and specialized courses. Students are offered twenty-seven Industry Based courses as well as a nationally certified Culinary Arts program.

**The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- The French and Spanish Immersion programs are highly valued by all stakeholders.
- Early childhood programs are aligned and have been redesigned to provide a continuum of services which address the social, developmental, and cognitive needs of the children.
- The district is committed to providing schools with technology resources and to supporting the integration of technology in instruction.
- Advanced Placement, Career/Technical, and specialized courses are augmented by the programs at Lake Charles-Boston Academy.
- Programs are in place to provide intervention and remediation as well as enrichment and acceleration based on students needs.

**The team offers suggestions for improvement and growth in this standard area:**

- Continue efforts which provide direction and support to schools and teachers to align curriculum and instruction with all available student assessment data to increase learning for all students.
- Procedures should be put in place to review and monitor School Improvement Plans to assure that action plans include appropriate strategies and activities.
- Formalize a process for analysis of all programs and initiatives to establish effective interventions as models for use throughout the district. Programs that are popular but neither research-based nor proving effective should be considered for omission.
- Establish a plan to expand participation in the opportunities provided at the Lake Charles-Boston Academy of Learning.

## Finding:

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational** indicating that the Calcasieu Parish Schools has met the accreditation requirements for this standard.

## Documenting and Using Results

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

*Impact Statement: A school system is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly-defined performance measures. The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, identify gaps between expectations for student learning and student performance, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to system and school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, system and school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.*

### Description

Calcasieu Parish School System has established a system for data collection from multiple sources to assess student performance. The LEAP and the iLEAP state tests results yield overall performance of the district and students in grades 3 through 8. These results drive curriculum decisions, the need for professional development activities, as well as programs used by individual schools to improve academic achievement. The high schools administer the Graduate Exit Exam (GEE) as mandated by the state. The PLAN and EXPLORE are used by counselors and teachers to assist students in planning career paths and for academic placement. The ACT is administered to determine college readiness, college placement and TOPS participation.

In addition to state mandated testing and national assessments, the district has implemented the SCANTRON Formative Common Assessment to monitor and adjust classroom instruction. The results are analyzed and used by Curriculum and Instruction (C & I) personnel, school administrators and teachers to make data driven decisions on curriculum design and instructional strategies. The SCANTRON results have also aided in vertical alignment across the grade levels. This assessment tool allows the schools to monitor real-time student academic growth. Schools use the individual student data to adjust instruction and assist in grouping and scheduling. Students use the results to set personal academic goals. These goals are periodically monitored by teachers, students, and parents for progress toward attainment. Both teachers and students maintain this information in Quality Binders.

These data results are communicated to all of the districts' stakeholders in a variety of ways including the district website, newsletters, parent conferences, Wayne's World and the Public Information Officer (PIO).

The Calcasieu Parish School System ranks 14<sup>th</sup> of 69 school systems in the Louisiana State Accountability System. District personnel assists the schools in interpreting and using the information derived from the school report card to write school improvement plans (SIP). In the past, most of the schools were successful in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in all subgroups. However, current

preliminary results indicate that twelve schools did not meet AYP standards. The district has to build capacity to identify and enact strategies to address these needs.

### **Strengths**

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Multiple assessments and data are available at the district and school levels.
- The district has implemented a new benchmark assessment system (SCANTRON) for use in grades 3 through 10.
- The assessment results are communicated to all stakeholders in a variety of ways.
- The SCANTRON assessment provides data that assist teachers in developing individualized instruction and allows students to set personal academic goals.

### **Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement**

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- The district and schools need to develop a systematic plan to monitor and assess programs to determine effectiveness.
- Continuously review trend data to implement or revise strategies that address the needs of all subgroups.
- Ensure that all administrators and teachers understand how to interpret and utilize the available data to make changes in instruction and verify student success.

### **Finding**

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational**, indicating that the Calcasieu Parish Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Documenting and Using Results standard.

## **Resource and Support Systems**

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

*Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that: enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The system employs and allocates staff well-qualified for their assignments. The system provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The system ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.*

### **Description**

The district recognizes the critical role of the resources and support systems necessary for student and school success; thus ensuring the needs of all children are met. As the district recognizes an additional need for staff or support systems, processes are in place to allocate resources where necessary.

A human resource director has been hired to assist in the recruitment, employment and retention of certified teachers and staff members. Additional support is provided to teachers new to the district through the New Teacher Academy. Monetary incentives are offered to attract highly qualified teachers

to low performing schools. Partnerships exist with local colleges and universities to provide tuition exemptions for teachers seeking certification/highly qualified status.

The district recognizes the systemic relationship of resources/support services and student learning. Some professional activities are state or federally mandated; others evolve from local needs and assessments such as SCANTRON or DIBELS data. Professional development is continuous and tailored to the current, individual needs of the staff, faculty, and administration. An integral part of the professional development is focused on strategies and interventions that are highlighted by recent benchmark assessments. Six days are designated throughout the school year for staff development at the school sites.

The district employs a chief financial officer and his staff to manage a \$300,000,000 budget. The district recognizes future needs and unforeseen events and using sound management and prudent principles has established a budget reserve (rainy-day fund) of \$29,000,000. The district financial department employs both internal and external auditors with generally accepted auditing principles. The school board has received national recognition for their comprehensive annual financial report for twenty-four consecutive years.

Health and safety are identified as important priorities. The system employs two nursing coordinators, eleven registered nurses and fifteen licensed practical nurses. School resource officers are assigned to each middle and high school. Previously, funding for these officers was provided by a grant. When funding expired, the district committed to continued support. These officers maintain a safe school environment. School safety, emergency crisis management planning and drills are coordinated by the Risk Management department. The Connect-Ed communication system automatically notifies parents of school closings and other emergency situations.

Technology is a high priority. Computer labs and Promethean Boards are utilized throughout the system. Use of technology is embedded in the professional development program. Extensive use of Blackboard, e-mail, Connect-Ed help facilitate the sharing of information throughout the district vertically and horizontally. The support from the district helps to maintain and refurbish computers and other hardware.

Curriculum consultants are available and meet frequently with schools and individual teachers to help improve delivery of instruction. Counselors and graduation coaches are site based and offer a variety of services to students, staff, and families. Children with exceptionalities including gifted and talented, are provided individualized educational opportunities according to their needs.

In summary, all departments of resources and support recognize the relationship to the district's vision and goals. The district's resources and support systems are operational.

### **Strengths**

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The district has programs and processes in place to provide resources and support throughout the district.
- Positions have been added (human resources director, public information officer, new teacher academy director, director of curriculum, and vocational/technical supervisor) to support the district's vision, mission, and goals.

- Effective financial management and planning provides the capacity to meet the district’s needs as evidenced by a rainy-day fund of \$29,000,000. The district ensures the safeguarding of financial resources through internal and external auditors.
- Technological support serves the instructional and administrative needs of the district, i.e. Connect-Ed and Blackboard.
- Health and safety is a priority as evidenced by the employment of nurse coordinators, registered nurses, practical nurses, school resource officers, and a risk management director.

**Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement**

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Recruiting, employing, and retaining highly qualified and certified personnel is a concern expressed across the district.
- Transportation should be used efficiently with the goal of meeting the needs of all students and maximizing instructional time. The district should explore options such as the use of staggered bell schedules, distance learning, and out of zone transfers.
- Define equity with respect to distribution of resources and implement strategies to ensure the needs of all children are met.

**Finding**

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational**, indicating that the Calcasieu Parish Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Resource and Support Systems standard.

**Stakeholder Communications and Relationships**

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

*Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. System and school personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.*

**Description**

The Calcasieu Parish School System has made significant efforts to enhance and develop programs that increase communication and collaboration among its stakeholders. An “Open-Door” policy for constituents is modeled by the superintendent and is evidenced throughout the system. The district utilizes various media to disseminate information. Through the offices of Public Information, Technology and Quality Assurance; electronic, print and local media sources are used to disseminate, gather and share information.

Through surveys and forums, stakeholder perception data is gathered, analyzed and utilized for school improvement efforts throughout the district. Team interviews with stakeholders revealed that they had accessibility to meaningful and useful information regarding the school system. The team reviewed community stakeholder print and electronic artifacts as well as perception data. Based upon review of artifacts and interviews conducted, the district demonstrates strong use of system wide strategies to effectively listen and communicate with stakeholders.

The school system has established a strong rapport with business and industry, governmental agencies and other educational entities. As a result, the system receives monetary support for scholarships, rewards, and incentives to enhance educational opportunities. Even though there are system wide processes in place to actively involve stakeholders, participation levels varied. The district team noted parental involvement varied significantly between schools.

The district has identified parental involvement as a key challenge. The team noted pockets where parental involvement is high, however, a significant number of schools struggle with this area. Membership in PTO/PTA ranged from more than double the population of a site to non-existent at others.

### **Strengths**

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Robust communication (i.e. Connect Ed, Blackboard, Checkbox, Newsletters, Websites)
- District initiated stakeholder forums
- Business In Education (241 partnerships)
- Dissemination and use of Annual and Quarterly Reports with stakeholders as a marketing tool

### **Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement**

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- The system should examine strategies regarding parental involvement and enact strategies to address this evident need. They should seek to extend opportunities for the sharing of best practices to develop school leadership in this area.
- Continue development of the Government Channel for televised school activities and forums
- Continue development of frequent and ongoing direct communications with parents and students through the use of Quality Binders

### **Finding**

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of Operational, indicating that the Calcasieu Parish Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Stakeholder Communications and Relationships standard.

## Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

*Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the system with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the system and its schools demonstrate progress in improving student performance. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through analysis of student performance, system effectiveness, and assessment of the improvement process.*

### Description

The superintendent, central office, and school dashboards provide vision, mission, core values and goals to provide direction for their system. The dashboards are visible in prominent places at schools and throughout the district. Websites, newsletters, and formal documents provide further exposure to Calcasieu’s overall vision and mission. There is a process for regular review of School Improvement Plans and student assessment data to inform future continuous improvement efforts.

Stakeholders are offered many opportunities to provide input into the process of continuous improvement. Informal and formal surveys are done for parents, faculty, and business partners. Annual Board Retreats, monthly meetings of the Superintendent with his Senior Leadership Team, monthly meetings of central office and principals, school-based grade level/team meetings extend opportunities for ongoing continuous improvement.

The visible representation of the vision, mission, core values, and goals through the Superintendent’s Dashboard provides all stakeholders a focus for continuous improvement. Each of the schools and departments align their own school/department Dashboard with the Superintendent, then ensure that their School Improvement Plans or Action Plans align, providing a seamless system for improving student achievement.

School Improvement Plans from each school address the school’s plan for continuous improvement while Professional Growth Plans for teachers provide focus for the teachers in improving student achievement. Encouraging teachers to use specific student achievement data of students in their class for developing specific and measurable goals on their Professional Growth Plans would really enhance their opportunity to increase student achievement. Calcasieu Parish is encouraged, not only to identify, but provide differentiated instruction for low performing and high performing students. This process would help close the gap between current and expected student performance levels.

The Curriculum and Instruction Department has provided professional development in a variety of topics that includes, but is not limited to: Thinking Maps, Cooperative Learning, Differentiated Instruction, etc. The CPSS Technology Department provides ongoing opportunities for district teachers and staff to improve their technology skills through numerous face-to-face and online workshops. The Classroom-Based Technology Project (CBT) appears to be a coordinated effort between the Technology Department and the Curriculum and Instruction Department. School administration and faculties who were interviewed seem to depend on knowledge and expertise of Central Office in providing professional development that is research based. Data sources of research were not evident.

Frequent monitoring of student achievement is evidenced by DIBELS, Scantron, LEAP, iLEAP, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, GEE, LAA (LA Alternative Assessment), STAR/AR, and Quality Student Data Binders. Superintendent, central office departments and school websites provide ongoing communication of improvement efforts. Communicating the results of continuous improvement efforts are evidenced by a variety of methods that include, but are not limited to: Blackboard, department and school websites, annual report, quarterly report, SHARE Newsletter, parent/school newsletters, and face to face meetings with business partners and parents.

From interviews with district and school personnel, it appears that they are analyzing the impact on student achievement through student test data, but no formal evaluation reports or documentation was provided. The district is encouraged to begin thinking of ways in which the district can evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional strategies being used and assessing whether or not they should be continued or ceased. Calcasieu Parish should also provide opportunities for frequent or at least periodic evaluations of effectiveness. No evidence of evaluation was found in the Standard Assessment Report (SAR) review, in interviews with school administration/faculties or in presentations of focus groups. An effort should be made to evaluate and document the effectiveness of professional development and its impact on continuous process of improvement. Evaluation information should then be shared with all stakeholders of the Calcasieu school system.

The Calcasieu Parish School System calendar provides six in-service days for all teachers. One is used for system-wide professional development and five are used for school-level professional development under the guidance of each building level administrator. Through faculty interviews, focus group presentations, and review of district and school calendar schedules, it appears that common planning time has been encouraged and implemented in the majority of school sites. Having a common planning time is critical in enabling all school departments to plan and assess their own progress toward improving student achievement.

### **Strengths**

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Alignment of the Calcasieu Parish School System with expectations of student learning are apparent and are especially emphasized via the system's mantra of "All Children are Important".
- Calcasieu Parish School System demonstrates that improvement efforts are working and are being sustained from district to schools.
- Data driven decision making was evident at the district and school level. New improvement efforts are validated through analysis of student performance, system effectiveness, and overall assessment of the improvement process.

### **Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement**

The team offers the following suggestions and opportunities for improvement in this standard area:

- Further investigation from the Central Office, along with more involvement of the school based administrators and faculties in determining what research-based professional development is best for specific needs of the teachers is encouraged throughout the Calcasieu school system. Data sources of research should also be provided.
- An effort should be made to evaluate and document the effectiveness of professional development and its impact on the continuous process of improvement. Evaluation documentation should then be shared with all stakeholders of the Calcasieu school system.
- Professional Growth Plans of teachers should align with classroom student achievement needs. Calcasieu Parish should identify sub groups of low performing and high performing students so that specific learning needs can be addressed.

### **Finding**

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Quality Assurance Review team has assigned the overall assessment level of **Operational**, indicating that the Calcasieu Parish Schools has met the accreditation requirements for the Commitment to Continuous Improvement standard.

## **Quality Assurance Findings**

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

### **Description**

The school system initiates and maintains several strategies to ensure that continuous improvement efforts and student achievement remain a focal point throughout the school district. The school system drives all of its improvement efforts at the school and district levels based on the purpose and direction established for the school system. All improvement plans are aligned with the system's vision and purpose. Improvement plans are derived from the analysis of data including achievement data and stakeholder feedback and input.

The school system makes a concerted effort to ensure that the accreditation standards are maintained at the school and district levels as well as using the standards to guide improvement efforts and support systemic alignment. The school system conducts quality assurance visits to schools to monitor improve efforts and ensure standards are being met.

Professional personnel are supported through a comprehensive evaluation system. New teachers participate in the state program – Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.

The school system maintains a consistent and focused effort to monitor and ensure quality. System employees and stakeholders project a significant degree of pride which is evidenced by efforts throughout the school system to ensure quality in all of its programs, practices, and processes.

### **Strengths**

- The school district provides significant leadership and support to schools including the tools and resources to engage in continuous improvement of student learning.
- The leadership by district personnel, including the superintendent, provides the focus and direction for staff at all levels to succeed.

### **Suggestions and Opportunities for Improvement**

- Build the capacity of the school system to identify, extend, and sustain successful practices throughout the school system.

## Conclusion

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

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

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to Wayne Savoy and Mary Beth Huber, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for hosting the review team. The team wishes the school and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS CASI accreditation with AdvancED.

## Appendix

### Quality Assurance Review Team Members

**Dr. Mark A. Elgart, Team Chair, (Georgia)** currently serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer of AdvancED, the parent organization for SACS CASI, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE). Additionally he serves on the Board of Directors of the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Knowledge Alliance. He also serves on the Advisory Committee for Measured Progress. Some of his prior experiences include central office and school based administration including middle school principal, secondary math and physics teacher.

**Ray Poplus, Vice-Chair, (Louisiana)** currently serves as Director of Instructional Support for St. Charles Parish Public Schools in Luling, Louisiana. Some his previous experiences include Director of High Schools, Supervisor of K-12 Math and Science, teacher assessor for the Louisiana Department of Education, teacher of math and computer science for middle and high school, conference planner for the National Staff Development Council and the National Association of High Schools, SACS CASI facilitator, and QAR Team Member and chair.

**Sharon K. Boutte (Texas)** currently serves as the Interim Director of Special Education for the Port Arthur Independent School District in Port Arthur, Texas. Some her previous experiences include special education teacher, educational diagnostician, assistant principal, principal and special education supervisor.

**Nancy Crain (Louisiana)** currently serves as the Supervisor of Instruction Winn Parish School District in Winnfield, Louisiana. She serves as the ELA, social studies, foreign language, fine arts, music, and librarian supervisor for grades 4 through 12. Some her previous experiences include District Coordinator for District Accreditation in Winn Parish, Winn Parish School Improvement Coordinator, ELA Curriculum Alignment Chairperson, ELA Curriculum Development Guide Writer, and English Department Chairperson. She is presently serving on the ELA state textbook committee for Louisiana.

**Kyle Dailey, (Florida)** currently serves as Curriculum Specialist for Broward County Schools in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Some his previous experiences include Grant Administrator, Grant Writer, High School online teacher and High School Social Studies teacher.

**Tom Daniel, (Louisiana)** currently serves as Secondary Supervisor, Grades 9-12, for the Bossier Parish Schools in Bossier City, Louisiana. Some his previous experiences include Assistant Principal at Greenacres Middle School, Science Coordinator, K-12 for Bossier Parish, and High School Physics and Physical Science Teacher at Parkway High School.

**Dr. Debra Elliott (Florida)** currently serves as the Director of Professional Development, Heartland Educational Consortium, Lake Placid, Florida. Some her previous experiences include Curriculum Resource Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, Director of Staff Development, Director of HR, Adjunct Professor and Director of Professional Development.

**Marian Fertitta (Louisiana)** currently serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Houma Thibodaux in Houma, Louisiana. Some her previous experiences include Accountability Supervisor for the Lafourche Parish Public School system. She also served as the Middle School and Technology Supervisor for the system and a Title I coordinator. Teaching experience includes 4-6 grades and Title I reading.

**Cindy Heupel (Oklahoma)** currently serves as an educational consultant serving districts throughout the state of Oklahoma. She mentors principals, superintendents and district level

administrators as well as assists districts with their school improvement efforts. Some her previous experiences include secondary social science teacher, gifted education teacher and program coordinator, assistant principal secondary level, principal secondary level (Aberdeen Public Schools, Aberdeen, S.D., and Public Relations Director for Muskogee Public Schools, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

**Paula “Scottie” Kuhlmann (Louisiana)** currently serves as the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, St. Tammany Parish Public School System, in Covington, Louisiana. Some her previous experiences include elementary teacher, math curriculum specialist, principal, and past Louisiana SACS CASI chair.

**Freida Lange (Nebraska)** currently serves as the Administrator of Accreditation and School Improvement for the Nebraska Department of Education in Lincoln, Nebraska, and State Director for NCA CASI. Some her previous experiences include elementary classroom teacher, coordinator of gifted programs (K-12), director of staff development in an intermediate service agency setting, and University of Nebraska adjunct faculty for instructional strategies and leadership.

**Arlana LeBlanc (Louisiana)** currently serves as the Middle School Math Curriculum Specialist for St. Tammany Parish Public School System. With her original degree in mass communications, she worked with many local, state and federal agencies in Texas; her last position as Public Relations Coordinator of the City of Beaumont. She has taught elementary and junior high school regular education as well as at-risk and accelerated classes. She was assistant principal prior to being recruited to her current position to assist with the design, development and implementation of District benchmark assessments for middle school math.

**Angela Lee (Louisiana)** currently serves as the Special Assistant to the Superintendent for Instructional Leadership for the East Baton Rouge Parish Schools in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In her role as Special Assistant she provides leadership in the areas of Strategic planning, Balanced Scorecard Strategic Management, School Improvement, Project Management, and Grant Administration. Some her previous experiences include high school assistant principal and English teacher.

**Jan Votravis (Oklahoma)** currently serves as the Associate Director for NCA CASI/AdvancED in the state of Oklahoma. Some her previous experiences include counseling at the Middle and High School levels for 28 years and Middle School educator for 7 years. She also taught AP Psychology and Speech.

**Jessica Webb (Florida)** currently serves as the Dean of Students at Lyman High School, in Seminole County, Florida. Some her previous experiences include teaching science and being an athletic trainer at Lyman High School for 5 1/2 years. She is currently working on her Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Central Florida.

## **AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems**

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

### **Vision and Purpose**

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

### **Governance and Leadership**

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

### **Teaching and Learning**

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

### **Documenting and Using Results**

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

### **Resource and Support Systems**

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

### **Stakeholder Communications and Relationships**

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

### **Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

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