
Transylvania County Board of Education Planning Retreat

Monday, February 1, 2010

AdvancED District Accreditation Update

I. Background

- a. From School-Based Accreditation to the District Accreditation Model
- b. 2004-2005: Quality Assurance Review and Initial District Accreditation in TCS
- c. 2006-2007: Two-Year Interim Progress Report
- d. 2009-2010: Quality Assurance Review for District Accreditation Renewal in TCS

II. 2010 Quality Assurance Review

- a. **Sunday, April 25, 2010 through Wednesday, April 28, 2010**
 - 1. Sunday, April 25, 2010: Team meeting (orientation, planning)
 - 2. Monday, April 26, 2010: District Presentations and Interviews
 - 1. Superintendent
 - 2. Central office administration
 - 3. School board members
 - 4. Parents, business members, community members
 - 5. Principals (not visited on Day 2)
 - 6. Support staff
 - 3. Tuesday, April 27, 2010: School Visits
 - 1. School leadership and SIT
 - 2. Teachers
 - 3. Parents, business members, community members
 - 4. Students
 - 4. Wednesday, April 28, 2010: Standards Verification and Team Deliberations; Oral Exit Report to the Board of Education
 - 1. Superintendent
 - 2. Others as determined by QAR team

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AdvancED District Accreditation Update, Continued

- b. District Standards Assessment Report
 - i. In-depth self-assessment focusing on the seven AdvancED standards
 - ii. Due **Friday, March 12, 2010**
 - c. QAR Artifacts: Demonstrate quality systems and compliance with the seven AdvancED standards
 - d. QAR Chair: Appointed by AdvancED three months prior to visit
 - e. QAR Team: Composed of seven to eight members and appointed by AdvancED (including teachers, principals, central administration staff, superintendents, AdvancED professional staff, and representatives from other appropriate agencies)
 - f. QAR Logistics: TCS coordinates all travel, lodging, meals, meeting spaces, materials, and other related details associated with the QAR visit
 - g. QAR Expenses and Fees:
 - i. Travel and lodging for QAR team members
 - ii. QAR review fee of \$750
 - iii. Invoiced within 30 days of QAR visit
 - h. Transparency of Reports: District Standards Assessment Report, Quality Assurance Review Report, Accreditation Status Report, and any related interim reports are public records under AdvancED guidelines
- III. An Overview of Continuous Improvement in Transylvania County Schools
- IV. Questions, Answers, and Related Discussion

An Overview of Continuous Improvement in Transylvania County Schools

1. Transylvania County Schools practices a *systemic approach to continuous improvement* that emphasizes the *alignment and connectedness* of improvement efforts across the national, state, district, departmental, school, and classroom levels.
2. The district's *strategic plan* represents the foundation for continuous improvement throughout the school system, and focuses the school system's efforts toward a set of clearly identified performance outcomes.
3. Beginning during the 2000-01 school year, the district's strategic plan was developed over a period of approximately sixteen months, and the process for its development included *broad-based participation among stakeholders* of the school system's efforts and results – district and school leaders, teachers and other instructional personnel, parents, community members, and students. *Quality tools* were used extensively in the collection, examination, and synthesis of stakeholder input.
4. On March 19, 2007, the Transylvania County Board of Education approved revisions to the district's strategic plan designed to realign local improvement efforts to the evolving structure of the State Board of Education's strategic plan. At the same time, several new performance indicators were also identified for expansion, development, and inclusion.
5. Structurally, the district's strategic plan includes three parts: the district's *mission statement*, *beliefs*, and *performance goals*. The mission statement broadly represents the district's fundamental organizational purpose. Belief statements express the district's underlying assumptions, commitments, and values with respect to public education. Performance goals translate the district's mission and beliefs into *measurable outcomes*.
6. Performance goals in the district's strategic plan are organized into five broad *priority areas* (Globally Competitive Students; 21st Century Professionals; Healthy and Responsible Students; Leadership; and, 21st Century Systems). Each priority area includes three to five operational goals, for a total of seventeen. For each operational goal, the district has identified performance indicators – associated data elements that quantify the district's performance and inform decision-making. For example:

PRIORITY: *Globally Competitive Students*

OPERATIONAL GOAL: *Every student masters essential knowledge and skills.*

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR: *Composite EOC & EOG Proficiency Rates*

7. Within the strategic plan, priority areas mirror state and national expectations for education systems, and operational goals reflect the expectations of local stakeholders within the Transylvania County community.
8. Thirty-nine performance indicators round out the strategic plan, and measure the district's progress with respect to its operational goals. These indicators include both *attitudinal / perceptual data* (annual stakeholder satisfaction composites, for example) and *educational performance data* (testing and achievement results, dropout rate, school crime and violence

statistics, and teacher quality data, for example). The balanced analysis of multiple data sources (*triangulation*) helps to inform decision-making.

9. Members of the District Leadership Team (system administrators, school administrators, and lead teachers) and members of the Board of Education catalog these performance indicators in a *district data notebook*. This information is also made available in an electronic format at <http://info.transylvania.k12.nc.us/>.
10. *Data analysis techniques* are applied to performance indicators in order to interpret results and inform action. Some of these techniques are simple (longitudinal tracking, data comparison and benchmarking). Some of these techniques are more sophisticated. Statistical Process Control techniques are applied to annual stakeholder satisfaction survey results, for example, to identify statistically significant variation over time and across respondent populations.
11. The Board of Education and District Leadership Team monitor the school system's continuous improvement efforts by tracking these performance indicators and making course adjustments based on consideration of the data. By employing this *quality assurance* technique, these bodies help to insure that the district's priorities and operational goals match the expectations of local, state, and national stakeholders.
12. School improvement efforts are tightly *aligned and connected* to the district's strategic plan, which provides the context or backdrop against which school improvement efforts unfold. Each school in the district boasts an active school improvement team that includes administrators, faculty and staff, parents, community members, and students (at some grade levels) and is charged with the development and implementation of a school improvement plan.
13. School Improvement Plans are in place at each school in the district. They are developed in three-year cycles (currently 2007-2010), and include a process for annual review and revision.
14. In developing the school improvement plan, the school improvement team completes a *systematic self-study* of its own performance relative to the district's strategic plan. Out of that self-study and examination of internal data, the school improvement team typically identifies one to two school goals within each of the five priority areas, for a total of five to seven long-term improvement targets. The development of these school goals translates broad strategic priorities into specific operational targets that represent significant leverage points for meaningful change.
15. The school improvement plan includes an alignment to the district's strategic plan, a measurable improvement outcome or goal, and an action plan identifying strategies, resources, timeline, and persons responsible for particular activities. It serves as a blueprint for long-term school improvement efforts, strengthens connections within the school system, and reflects balance between school-level decision-making and the broader performance ambitions of the school system as a whole.
16. In short, Transylvania County Schools' continuous improvement process strives to connect district improvement, school improvement, and classroom improvement by aligning the district's strategic plan, school improvement plans, and CII individual growth plans. By strengthening connections throughout the system, increased momentum, concerted effort, and collaboration help to produce quality results for the children of our county.