Washington County School District

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Cognia Continuous Improvement System

Cognia defines continuous improvement as "an embedded behavior rooted in an institution's culture that constantly focuses on conditions, processes, and practices to improve teaching and learning." The Cognia 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. Cognia 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.

The findings of the Engagement Review Team are organized by the ratings from the Cognia Performance Standards Diagnostic and the Levels of Impact within the i3 Rubric: Initiate, Improve, and Impact.

Initiate

The first phase of the improvement journey is to **Initiate** actions to cause and achieve better results. The elements of the Initiate phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Engagement and Implementation. Engagement is the level of involvement and frequency of stakeholders in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. Implementation is the process of monitoring and adjusting the administration of the desired practices, processes, or programs for quality and fidelity. Standards identified within Initiate should become the focus of the institution's continuous improvement journey toward the collection, analysis, and use of data to measure the results of engagement and implementation. Enhancing the capacity of the institution in meeting these Standards has the greatest potential impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Improve

The second phase of the improvement journey is to gather and evaluate the results of actions to **Improve**. The elements of the **Improve** phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Results and Sustainability. Results come from the collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired result(s). Sustainability is results achieved consistently to demonstrate growth and improvement over time (a minimum of three years). Standards identified within Improve are those in which the institution is using results to inform their continuous improvement processes and to demonstrate over time the achievement of goals. The institution should continue to analyze and use results to guide improvements in student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Impact

The third phase of achieving improvement is **Impact,** where desired practices are deeply entrenched. The elements of the **Impact** phase are defined within the Level of Impact of Embeddedness. Embeddedness is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are deeply ingrained in the culture and operation of the institution. Standards identified within Impact are those in which the institution has demonstrated ongoing growth and improvement over time and has embedded the practices within its culture. Institutions should continue to support and sustain these practices that yield results in improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

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Cognia Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

Accreditation is pivotal in leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research-based standards, the Cognia 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 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 Cognia Performance Standards. Review teams use these Standards to assess the quality of learning environments to gain valuable insights and target improvements in teaching and learning. Cognia 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, which helps to focus and guide each institution's improvement journey. Valuable evidence and information from other stakeholders, including students, also are obtained through interviews, surveys, and additional activities.

Cognia Standards Diagnostic Results

The Cognia Performance Standards Diagnostic is used by the Engagement Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on the Cognia Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity,** and **Resource Capacity**. Results are reported within four ranges identified by color. The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

Color	Rating	Description
Red	Insufficient	Identifies areas with insufficient evidence or evidence that indicated little or no activity leading toward improvement
Yellow	Initiating	Represents areas to enhance and extend current improvement efforts
Green	Improving	Pinpoints quality practices that are improving and meet the Standards
Blue	Impacting	Demonstrates noteworthy practices producing clear results that positively impact the institution

Under each Standard statement is a row indicating the scores related to the elements of Cognia's i3 Rubric. The rubric is scored from one (1) to four (4). A score of four on any element indicates high performance, while a score of one or two indicates an element in need of improvement. The following table provides the key to the abbreviations of the elements of the i3 Rubric.

Element	Abbreviation
Engagement	EN
Implementation	IM
Results	RE
Sustainability	SU
Embeddedness	EM

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.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	4	**EM:**	3	
1.2	Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the system's purpose and desired outcomes for learning.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	
1.3	The system engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	
1.4	The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support system effectiveness.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	
1.5	The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	4	**EM:**	4	
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	
1.7	Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	3	
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the system's purpose and direction.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	
1.9	The system provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.										Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	3	
1.10	Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	

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Leadership Capacity Standards											Rating
1.11	Leaders implement a quality assurance process for their institutions to ensure system effectiveness and consistency.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	

Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement and success is the primary expectation of every institution. An effective learning culture is characterized by positive and productive teacher/learner relationships, high expectations and standards, a challenging and engaging curriculum, quality instruction and comprehensive support that enable all learners to be successful, and assessment practices (formative and summative) that monitor and measure learner progress and achievement. Moreover, a quality institution evaluates the impact of its learning culture, including all programs and support services, and adjusts accordingly.

Learning Capacity Standards											Rating
2.1	Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the system.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	4	**EM:**	4	
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving.										Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3	
2.3	The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs, and skills needed for success.										Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3	
2.4	The system has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers that support their educational experiences.										Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3	
2.5	Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	
2.6	The system implements a process to ensure the curriculum is clearly aligned to standards and best practices.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	4	**EM:**	4	
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the system's learning expectations.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	4	**EM:**	4	
2.8	The system provides programs and services for learners' educational futures and career planning.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	3	

Learning Capacity Standards											Rating
2.9	The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners.										Impacting
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.										Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	3	
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to the demonstrable improvement of student learning.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	4	**EM:**	4	
2.12	The system implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	3	

Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably, so the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The institution examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, organizational effectiveness, and increased student learning.

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.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	3	
3.2	The system's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	3	
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.										Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3	
3.4	The system attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the system's purpose and direction.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	4	**EM:**	4	
3.5	The system integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	

Resource Capacity Standards										Rating
3.6	The system provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the system.									Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	3	
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.									Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	4	**EM:**	4	
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.									Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	4	**EM:**	4	

Assurances

Assurances are statements that accredited institutions must confirm they are meeting. The Assurance statements are based on the type of institution, and the responses are confirmed by the Accreditation Engagement Review Team. Institutions are expected to meet all Assurances and are expected to correct any deficiencies in unmet Assurances.

Assurances Met		
YES	**NO**	**If No, List Unmet Assurances by Number Below**
X		

Accreditation Status and Index of Education Quality®

Cognia will review the results of the Accreditation Engagement Review to make a final determination concerning accreditation status, including the appropriate next steps for your institution in response to these findings. Cognia provides the Index of Education Quality (IEQ) as a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. This formative tool for improvement identifies areas of success and areas in need of focus. The IEQ comprises the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: Leadership Capacity, Learning Capacity, and Resource Capacity. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provide information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria. Institutions should review the IEQ in relation to the findings from the review in the areas of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. An IEQ score below 250 indicates that the institution has several areas within the Initiate level and should focus their improvement efforts on those Standards within that level. An IEQ in the range of 225–300 indicates that the institution has several Standards within the Improve level and is using results to inform continuous improvement and demonstrate sustainability. An IEQ of 275 and above indicates the institution is beginning to reach the Impact level and is engaged in practices that are sustained over time and are becoming ingrained in the culture of the institution.

Below is the average (range) of all Cognia Improvement Network (CIN) institutions evaluated for accreditation in the last five years. The range of the annual CIN IEQ average is presented to enable you to benchmark your results with other institutions in the network.

Institution IEQ	**362.74**	CIN 5 Year IEQ Range	278.34 – 283.33

Insights from the Review

The Engagement Review Team engaged in professional discussions and deliberations about the processes, programs, and practices within the institution to arrive at the findings of the team. These findings are organized around themes guided by the evidence, with examples of programs and practices, and suggestions for the institution's continuous improvement efforts. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide contextualized information from the team's deliberations and analysis of the practices, processes, and programs of the institution organized by the levels of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. The narrative also provides the next steps to guide the institution's improvement journey in its 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 its current improvement efforts and to adapt and adjust their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

The Accreditation Engagement Review for Washington County School System was conducted during the coronavirus pandemic. Given the restrictions for an onsite review, the Accreditation Engagement Review occurred entirely online. The Engagement Review Team's (team) full intention was to gain as much information as possible to rate the Cognia Performance Standards, review the evidence, and engage all stakeholder groups in the virtual process.

Quality information gathering sessions included a presentation by the superintendent, interviews with 111 stakeholders representing all stakeholder groups, and a deep dive into the evidence provided to the team. The school system evaluated typical instructional environments using the eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®), and the team reviewed data from these 202 system observations. The team found the following themes across the school system and provided suggestions for next steps.

The governing board, superintendent, and system-level administrative team provide dedicated and focused leadership with a clear direction and commitment to the school system's continuous improvement. As evidenced through board minutes and interviews, the governing authority commits to the establishment and adherence to policies that promote the system's effective operations. Board members participate in multiple training opportunities and continuously provide leadership with autonomy for day-to-day operations. Being designated as a "Board of Distinction" by the Georgia School Boards Association in 2020 provides proof that board members internalized their training, and their actions align with the code of ethics. A board member shared how one of the most important jobs of the governing board is selecting a highly-qualified superintendent. "The board has selected a passionate, hard-working leader who has the ability to draw people together. He has analyzed the talents of individuals and matched talent to job assignment," stated one internal stakeholder. "He understands instruction and meets regularly with system and school leaders to ensure that everyone is working towards the purpose of *Developing the Whole Child*," stated an administrator. When asked about the superintendent, stakeholders used the following words to describe him: dedicated, hard-working, accessible, highly visible, transparent, focused, determined, and everywhere all the time. Stakeholder groups spoke of the superintendent's strengths and referenced the system-level administrators and shared how the entire team is moving in the same direction. Interviews and documentation revealed an organizational chart that had been redesigned for more efficiency. Leaders effectively implement supervision and evaluation processes and analyze results to inform professional practices and ensure

student learning. Data from the analysis of standard operating procedures show growth and improvement in the effective implementation of routine operations that support teaching and learning across the system.

The laser focus on continuous improvement is substantiated through the documentation on the collaborative process implemented to develop the strategic plan for 2020-2021. The comprehensive process created universal ownership and support for system improvement. Twenty-one priorities were narrowed to the 'Big-6' with goals in leadership, literacy, public relations, and marketing, Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) implementation, workforce development, and student services (e.g., Multi-Tiered System of Support, Response to Intervention, Social-Emotional Learning). Leadership organized SMART Teams and continued to follow detailed plans for monitoring progress on the Big-6 priorities by presenting their 25 Point Inspection Report monthly on those key elements being monitored and tracked. Stakeholders shared how systems thinking via SMART actions are at the heart of the Washington County School System's success. Each SMART Team has a specialized purpose with a facilitator, set meeting dates, and identified artifacts and evidence for SMART work. Each SMART Team generates Balanced Scorecards, including objectives, baseline data, formative data points for each quarter, and indicators for success. Records and interviews demonstrate a very structured, systematic improvement process with systems thinking via SMART actions. The system is to be commended on its strong leadership. The team encourages the ongoing commitment to using systems thinking principles and SMART teaming and planning so that it is deeply ingrained and protected throughout the operations of the school system.

Meaningful stakeholder engagement and intentional communication efforts are cornerstones of the school system's success. Artifacts and interviews indicated the inclusion of all stakeholder groups in the revision of the mission and vision and the development of the strategic plan. Community members, parents, staff, and students were well-represented in the groups interviewed by the team, and each group spoke of regularly scheduled sessions to get their input. Participating in the comprehensive needs assessment process, school councils, Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) advisory committees, and SMART teams were just a few of the opportunities afforded stakeholder groups. "Various groups are also surveyed, and leaders meet with us to discuss survey results and ask for input on next steps for improvement," stated an external stakeholder. Parent needs surveys, personnel needs surveys, return to school surveys, employee school surveys, senior class surveys, and the Cognia surveys and inventories were some of the many surveys the system had administered and analyzed to guide decision-making. Students shared that their input is gathered through student council and principal cabinets and gave examples of law enforcement and health care pathways being added based on their interests and requests. Internal and external stakeholders indicated community partnerships exist and that the community is involved in the system's continuous efforts. "A partnership with the local health department resulted in all of our students getting flu vaccinations," shared an administrator. Internal stakeholders reported their input is valued, and they are heavily engaged in the school system's collaborative decision-making process. System leaders shared information about professional learning communities (PLCs) being conducted regularly to review student data and make system-wide decisions to impact student achievement. Teachers spoke of collaborative planning times to review curriculum, pacing guides, and student performance data. Without exception, every stakeholder group spoke of their meaningful engagement in the collaborative culture for supporting learners in pursuit of their goals.

The system's intentional communication efforts directly connect to its successful stakeholder engagement. The team heard the word 'transparency' repeatedly during internal and external stakeholder group interviews. In addition to the numerous surveys administered and analyzed as a part of the continuous improvement process, the system used multiple media avenues. Artifacts revealed the

traditional communication methods such as flyers, letters, school calendars, system and school websites, and automated calling such as Remind 101. Staff members shared how the addition of parent engagement coordinators had helped. A community representative, for example, stated, "The superintendent held 25 meetings with stakeholder groups across the community within the first 100 days on the job." That commitment to engagement and open communication was further noted by Fireside Chats, Town Hall meetings, Wee Talks with students, Hawk Talks, weekly updates on the system website, Friday callouts to parents, and a dedicated email for parent questions. One internal stakeholder shared, "We are good at telling our story. We engage folks, so they are empowered." The system currently expects active engagement of all stakeholder groups and frequent and varied communication efforts. The review team encourages the system to ensure that these practices and programs continue to be ingrained throughout the school system's culture.

A standards-based, results-driven curriculum complemented by an effective instructional model meets students' needs and the system's learning expectations. Interviews and artifacts provided evidence the system used the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Through collaborative planning, pacing guides have been developed for all levels with approximate numbers of days for coverage of the standards, depth of knowledge (DOK) noted, and priority standards and units of study identified. Walkthrough observations by instructional staff members focus on the DOK with documentation showing what teachers are doing, what students are doing, and the DOK level for the particular learning activity. Internal stakeholders shared how achievement level descriptors are used in all Georgia Milestones courses as educators are engaged in curriculum alignment to standards and best practices. Interviews and artifacts validated the system's pledge to Committed Norms for evidence-based practices. Leaders and teachers spoke of their commitment to teaching the curriculum with fidelity, monitoring all students' progress, and ensuring the use of a common instructional framework known as Gradual Release with an opening, a work period, and a closing. Teachers shared common expectations for all classrooms across the system, including the posting of standards and essential questions, daily agendas, lesson plans, content vocabulary, high-frequency words, and classroom expectations.

Educators across the system demonstrated their commitment to the consistent use of data to verify learner progress and modify instructional practices to improve student learning. An assessment calendar documented every benchmark, screener, and diagnostic administered each nine weeks. Documents revealed Job Aids for collaborative planning and data talks. Staff members discussed the collaborative planning sessions held weekly as a content area and the data talks held at the end of each assessment. In the data talks for kindergarten through grade 12, staff members use formative assessments to determine remediation or acceleration. Lesson plans, assessment data, personalized learning activities, and professional learning experiences provide evidence that students have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve learning priorities established by the system. One of the Big-6 priorities is the system's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), Response to Intervention (RTI), and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). Interviews validated how staff members identify student needs, select interventions, plan implementation, and continuously examine progress. "We know approximately 80% of our students are in Tier One; approximately 20% are in Tier Two with such targeted interventions as Fast Forward, Reading Plus, Read 180, and Dreambox; and approximately 5% are in Tier Three with intense interventions such as wrap-around support, counseling, mentoring, and Suite 360," stated an internal stakeholder. Students shared how they are supported during HAWK Time, a 45-minute period protected for daily interventions with lesson plans for each identified group of students and detailed routines/procedures. Interviews substantiated the naming of a gifted coordinator, the expansion of gifted and accelerated classes, and implementation of Innovative, Gifted, Accelerated Learning (IGAL) for hands-on experiences focused on science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. Students proudly reported on the many pathways they could select and the dual enrollment opportunities that are increasing each year. With a standards-based, results-driven curriculum complemented by an effective

instructional framework that results in graduation rates above the state average, the system is encouraged to continue the data analysis and usage to monitor and adjust services and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services in meeting the specialized needs of all learners.

The school system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and wise use of resources to support the system's mission and vision. Financial records and the facilities plan provide evidence of adherence to the established budgets. Continuous monitoring is evident through interviews and artifact/records reviews. The finance director proudly reported a sound fund balance and an excellent financial reporting rating for the past six years. "The board's allocation of resources is driven by its dedication to student achievement. Even with budget cuts and staffing issues related to Covid-19 quarantine and isolation guidelines, the finance department has implemented strategies that bridged the gaps and contributed to the effective stewardship of the system's resources," stated an internal stakeholder. Documentation showed that the system had enjoyed the passage of four Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) initiatives, with the most recent one renewed at the highest passage rate. The system used those funds to support the five-year facilities plan with new school construction and renovations to existing facilities with improvements in roofing, heating, ventilation, and air condition (HVAC); lighting; fencing; technology; and bus transportation. Students and staff members continually voiced their convictions that they have access to informational resources and materials that support their needs, interests, and the teaching and learning programs. "Community partnerships and representatives from businesses support our educational efforts, thus demonstrating the commitment of external stakeholders to be engaged in our strategic resource management process," shared a system leader.

Administrators shared information about the level of technology equipment at each school and the support for its usage. "The system is pleased to be at the 1:1 ratio for Chromebooks with middle and high school students permitted to take their computers home. Students in pre-kindergarten through grade five have a 1:1 ratio but leave their Chromebooks at school," shared a system leader. The provision of a G Suite for Education account for all staff members and students enables Google Classroom as the primary method of pushing course content and assignments to students. Primary school personnel shared their use of SeeSaw and how they use that platform with their students to create digital portfolios. Technology integration is a component of the Committed Norms for the school system and must be a part of teachers' weekly lesson plans. Each school has a technology support specialist in providing immediate support for effectively integrating digital tools in teaching and learning. One teacher stated, "We have an established work order system that alerts the assigned instructional technology staff member when an issue arises." Records validated system support with technology integration with such programs as a technology cohort, a technology carousel, and staff Google certification initiatives. "Digital Learning Day is an annual event in which we learn the most creative ways of using technology," reported a school leader. "This year, we began using Clever as a single sign-on platform for teachers and students. With so many software programs in use, this makes access to those programs easier for everyone." Even with the system's commitment to the integration of digital resources into all aspects of the system, approximately 57% of classroom observations conducted by system leaders included the effective use of digital tools by students and showed only 50% of students using technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning.

Having a high-quality workforce is another important component of strategic resource management. Records and interviews indicate that the teacher retention rate has been above the state average for years, with the retention rate for FY2020 at 95%. "We have increased our salaries for certified and classified personnel. We can't pay the salaries that some of the wealthier systems pay, but we do everything possible to support our people," stated one system administrator. Another administrator shared, "We know that professional development is key to improving the learning environment, student

achievement, and system effectiveness. Therefore, we have developed a robust professional learning program." Records indicate that regularly scheduled PLCs operate throughout the system as a platform for continuous development and improvement of staff members' professional practices. The team commends the system for its resource allocations that are consistently aligned to the identified goals and key priorities. Evidence indicates a need to integrate digital resources more effectively into teaching and learning at all levels to sustain growth and improvement over time.

The school system lacks formalized processes and procedures to use longitudinal results to impact sustained growth and improvement over time. When asked about the cultivation of leadership, internal stakeholders shared their participation in the Aspiring Leaders program followed by participation in Launch. "When our new superintendent arrived, we reviewed Launch and determined it was a good tool kit that helped us with problem-solving but was not what we needed for leadership development," stated an internal stakeholder. Interviews and records revealed a new initiative known as "For Us, By Us" began in the previous school year, but no manuals or formalized procedures had been developed. "The newly-developed teacher/administrator positions are a result of this new leadership initiative, but we have no data on the effectiveness of the structure," shared an administrator. When asked about induction, mentoring, and coaching for new staff, a staff member provided a one-page document that gave the rationale for the program, guidelines for mentors, and a requirement that mentors meet once each semester. The system provided no training requirements for mentors and no guidance from mentors and coaches about observations, lesson plans, instructional delivery, student learning, or organizational norms. Staff also provided no data on the impact of the mentoring, induction, and coaching programs for improving professional practice and student learning.

One of the Big-6 SMART teams focuses on system-wide STEAM implementation to expand student meta-cognition through the project, and inquiry-based learning experiences focused on robotics and cybersecurity. The system has added a gifted coordinator. The IGAL Academy is in the beginning stages of promoting hands-on learning focusing on science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. Staff members shared information on "What's Up WACO," a recently added video production class with approximately 18 students participating. With the many initiatives, limited longitudinal data currently exist to measure the development of learners' creativity, innovation, and problem-solving.

Leaders and students spoke of many initiatives in place to ensure learners develop relationships with and have adults/peers that support their educational experiences. Check and Connect, Rise Up mentoring program, Suite 360 lesson modules, and the Academic Behavior Student (ABS) Center for students needing behavior support were some of the activities and resources documented by artifacts and mentioned in stakeholder interviews. Artifacts and interviews revealed excitement about the many relationship-building initiatives, but data sources on the effectiveness of these programs were limited. Although documentation disclosed that learning progress is assessed and communicated frequently and common grading practices have been established, interviews with staff members revealed varying processes being executed in the implementation of the grading practices aligned to specific criteria. Interview evidence did not substantiate the implementation of common grading practices across all classrooms and programs at a given level. In summary, with new leaders at the system and school levels, numerous initiatives, programs, and services in the early stages of implementation now exist. The team recommends that the system continue formalizing the processes and procedures to use longitudinal results to impact sustained growth and improvement over time.

At the center of success for Washington County School System are the following: a dedicated leadership team with a laser focus on continuous improvement; meaningful stakeholder engagement and intentional communication efforts; a standards-based, results-driven curriculum complemented by an effective instructional model that supports all students; and strategic resource management with human and fiscal resources aligned to system needs and priorities. The Engagement Review Team members

listened carefully to the system's stakeholders and appreciated their willingness to share information about strengths and challenges. For increased success and educational excellence for all students, formalizing processes that use longitudinal results to impact improvement will sustain growth and improve student learning and become deeply ingrained and protected throughout the school system's culture and operations.

Next Steps

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 areas for improvement 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 the improvement journey.

Team Roster

The Engagement Review Teams are comprised of professionals with varied backgrounds and expertise. To provide knowledge and understanding of the Cognia tools and processes, all Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members are required to complete Cognia training. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Cheryl Allread, Lead Evaluator	Dr. Cheryl Allread's career spans over 48 years. She retired from Marion County Schools in South Carolina after seven years as a math and science teacher,11 years as a principal, 11 years as a superintendent for instruction, and seven years as a district superintendent. After retirement from 36 years in Marion County, she began working as a consultant with the South Carolina State Department of Education, serving as a liaison for low-performing schools. She also conducted academic audits, served as a principal mentor, and served as a leadership coach in instructional supervision. Dr. Allread currently works as Lead Evaluator for Cognia in schools and systems across the United States and internationally, as well as continuing to work as a consultant with schools and systems in instructional supervision.
Janet Haas, Associate Lead Evaluator	Dr. Janet Haas has participated with Cognia since 1990, as a school educator, as a state council member and chair, lead and associate lead evaluator, and team member on review teams in Michigan and other states, including serving on a team with the department of defense review. She is currently a Michigan Cognia field consultant. Ms. Haas was a department chair, assistant principal, principal, and director in Career Technical Education (CTE). Ms. Haas has been an adjunct professor at Wayne State University in the College of Education/Masters of Teacher Education. She earned degrees at Michigan State, Eastern Michigan, Wayne State Universities, and an endorsement at Madonna University. Ms. Haas has presented at local, state, and national conferences in the areas of CTE, integration of academics, and teacher education. Since retiring in 2014, she has been a program director for Brighton Shared Services. She received Michigan's Cognia Excellence in Education Award.

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Brittany Cunningham	During her 21-year educational career, Dr. Brittany Cunningham has served as a teacher, assistant principal, secondary school principal, district testing director, and principal coach. In 2016, Dr. Cunningham was named DeKalb County School District Principal of the Year for her leadership in increasing student achievement and access to rigorous coursework for all students. In her current role as principal coach for Atlanta Public Schools, Dr. Cunningham guides the growth and development of new and turnaround school principals. She partners with school leadership teams in developing and implementing school improvement plans and identifying opportunities to build capacity. Dr. Cunningham earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from Emory University and has a master's degree in management and a doctorate in educational policy studies from Georgia State University. Dr. Cunningham serves as a presenter and trainer at state and national conferences on ethics and leadership.
Laura Dickerson	Ms. Laura Dickerson serves as the math improvement specialist for the Haralson County School System. Ms. Dickerson earned a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Georgia and her educational specialist from the State University of West Georgia, specializing in secondary mathematics, gifted education, and instructional technology. She has been a high school math teacher for 21 years, serving students in all math courses from remedial math to Advanced Placement (AP) statistics, and has served as department head, mentor teacher, and instructional coach.
Debbie Fountain	Debbie Fountain is the curriculum director with the Jenkins County School System. In this position, she coordinates curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability functions within the school system. Ms. Fountain received her Bachelor of Science from Georgia Southern University and a Master of Social Work from the University of Georgia, later obtaining educational leadership certification from Georgia Southern University. She began her education career as a school social worker then program coordinator with the GNETS program. She has worked with the Jenkins County School System for 22 years, beginning as an assistant principal before moving into the curriculum director position. Ms. Fountain has coordinated system accreditation activities within her system for the past ten years and has served on several Cognia Engagement Review Teams.

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Kraig Howell	Kraig Howell currently serves a dual role for Alcovy High School in Newton County, serving as a part-time administrator and part-time special education teacher. Throughout his 15 years in education, Mr. Howell has served as a behavior specialist, PBIS district coordinator, special education coordinator, RtI/SST coordinator, assistant principal, and GNETS assistant director. Mr. Howell received his Bachelor of Arts from Emory University, a Master of Arts in teaching from Piedmont College, a certification in educational leadership from Georgia State University, and an Educational Specialist from the University of Georgia.

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