



Bulloch County School System

Statesboro, Georgia

March 13–16, 2022

System Accreditation Engagement Review

215020

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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.

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: | 3 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 3 | EM: | |
| 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: | 4 | EM: | |
| 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: | |
| 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: | 4 | EM: | |
| 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: | |
| 1.6 | Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness. | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 3 | RE: | 2 | SU: | 2 | EM: | |
| 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: | |
| 1.8 | Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the system's purpose and direction. | | | | | | | | | Impacting |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 4 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 3 | EM: | |
| 1.9 | The system provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness. | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 2 | RE: | 2 | SU: | 2 | EM: | |
| 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: | 4 | EM: | |
| 1.11 | Leaders implement a quality assurance process for their institutions to ensure system effectiveness and consistency. | | | | | | | | | Impacting |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 4 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 2 | EM: | |

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. | | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 3 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 2 | EM: | 3 | |
| 2.2 | The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving. | | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 3 | IM: | 2 | RE: | 2 | SU: | 2 | EM: | 2 | |
| 2.3 | The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs, and skills needed for success. | | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 3 | IM: | 3 | RE: | 4 | SU: | 2 | EM: | 2 | |
| 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: | 2 | RE: | 2 | SU: | 2 | EM: | 3 | |
| 2.5 | Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels. | | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 3 | RE: | 2 | SU: | 2 | EM: | 3 | |
| 2.6 | The system implements a process to ensure the curriculum is clearly aligned to standards and best practices. | | | | | | | | | | Impacting |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 3 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 3 | EM: | 3 | |
| 2.7 | Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the system's learning expectations. | | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 3 | IM: | 3 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 2 | EM: | 3 | |
| 2.8 | The system provides programs and services for learners' educational futures and career planning. | | | | | | | | | | Impacting |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 4 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 2 | EM: | 3 | |
| 2.9 | The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners. | | | | | | | | | | Impacting |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 4 | RE: | 4 | SU: | 3 | EM: | 4 | |
| 2.10 | Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated. | | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 3 | IM: | 3 | RE: | 2 | SU: | 2 | EM: | 3 | |

| Learning Capacity Standards | | | | | | | | | | Rating |
|-----------------------------|--|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|-----------|
| 2.11 | Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to the demonstrable improvement of student learning. | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 3 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 2 | EM: | |
| 2.12 | The system implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning. | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 2 | IM: | 2 | RE: | 2 | SU: | 2 | EM: | |

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: | 4 | RE: | 4 | SU: | 3 | EM: | |
| 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: | 4 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 2 | EM: | |
| 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: | 4 | IM: | 4 | RE: | 2 | SU: | 2 | EM: | |
| 3.4 | The system attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the system's purpose and direction. | | | | | | | | | Impacting |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 4 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 3 | EM: | |
| 3.5 | The system integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness. | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 4 | IM: | 4 | RE: | 2 | SU: | 2 | EM: | |
| 3.6 | The system provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the system. | | | | | | | | | Improving |
| | EN: | 3 | IM: | 3 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 2 | EM: | |
| 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: | 3 | RE: | 3 | SU: | 3 | EM: | |

| Resource Capacity Standards | | | | | | | | | | | Rating |
|-----------------------------|--|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----------|
| 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 | 340.48 | 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 Engagement Review Team (team) identified four themes aligned to the continuous improvement process at the Bulloch County Schools. These themes present both strengths and opportunities to guide the system's improvement journey. The team conducted remote stakeholder interviews and reviewed artifacts provided by the system leaders prior to the review. Themes are linked to Cognia's Standards for increasing the system's capacity for leadership, learning, and resource use.

Stakeholders demonstrate a shared commitment to the purpose statements, and system leaders align actions to ensure the achievement of the system's vision, mission, core values, and desired outcomes for student learning. Interviews with leaders, teachers, parents, students, board members, and community leaders confirmed stakeholder engagement is valued and supported throughout the system. Core values are based on initiatives that are relational, purposeful, reflective, resourceful, courageous, and accountable. The system's culture is permeated by a growth mindset built upon a set of shared core values. A board member commented that the core values are at the forefront of all decision-making "from the boardroom to the classroom." The overview presentation and interviews indicated the focus of all initiatives is always on the student and the shared belief in continuous improvement. System leaders provided clear examples of the ways in which actions align with the purpose statements and core values. The strategic development of partnerships suggests the relationships are aligned with system goals. Formalized partnerships with groups, including the Boy's and Girl's Clubs, the Literacy Council, and the County Parks and Recreation Department enable the system to extend services to meet the needs of students. The Virtual Learning Academy and partnership with the Coastal Pines Charter Graduation Academy are additional programs that provide another layer of support for student success. The Coastal Pines Academy targets students who need additional programs to meet graduation requirements. An example of the Literacy Council's programs to support and encourage reading and literacy throughout the community is the Book Nook program that provides books to students free of charge.

Stakeholders identified multiple communication methods used by the system to ensure information is disseminated in a timely manner. System and school leaders use social media, newsletters, press releases, and Infinite Campus to provide information to the diverse community. The system has three distinct geographic areas, but community members and parents commented that the system uses diversity among the areas as a strength. One stakeholder commented, "We are three different areas, but one school district." The district benefits from ethical governance. The school board adopted policies that define roles and responsibilities, a code of conduct, and procedures for the review and revision of policies. The system engages in a continuous improvement process that includes protocols to review data from student achievement, organizational effectiveness, and stakeholder perception surveys.

Monthly leadership meetings maintain an intentional focus on monitoring progress related to all improvement goals and key priorities. Parents reported the system consistently collects feedback on a variety of topics. Stakeholders are actively engaged in system initiatives through participation in various groups, including the District Parent Advisory Committee, the Cultural Diversity Committee, the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (E-SPLOST) Committee, and the Facilities Committee. Interviews with stakeholders confirmed the committees give authentic opportunities to participate in the system's improvement process. The passage of the E-SPLOST is evidence of the system's support by local taxpayers. Collaboration with local post-secondary institutions supports dual enrollment, active engagement in improvement initiatives, and additional opportunities for professional learning activities. Although leaders and teachers highlighted the importance of positive relationships among students and between students and teachers, a formal, systematic structure with resources, designated time, and activities was limited. Although stakeholder engagement in the system and school improvement planning was identified as a strength, a practice to evaluate stakeholder engagement strategies to ensure continued support was not evident. The team suggests system leaders develop and implement a process to evaluate strategies to ensure stakeholders are engaged in system initiatives, define metrics to monitor the strategies, analyze the data, and use those data to adjust strategies to maintain the current level of satisfaction among all stakeholder groups. The team encourages leaders to strengthen the student advocacy structure at all schools with meetings, activities, and resources and to monitor and adjust the programs in response to data from the evaluation of their effectiveness. The team noted the diversity in the various school communities limits equity in access to programs and services for all students. The team encourages leaders to identify strategies to ensure all students have equitable access to academic and career programs to achieve their goals regardless of the school to which they are zoned. For example, a student in one high school has limited opportunities to enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) courses while students in other schools have multiple AP course options. The team encourages leaders to explore options to provide all students with opportunities to take rigorous, challenging courses to support the goal of college and career readiness for all students.

The system provides, protects, and values collaboration among all stakeholder groups. System and school leaders stated that participation in professional learning communities (PLC) is a non-negotiable expectation throughout the system. Professional learning community meetings are held weekly throughout the system with guidelines that include outlines, clear expectations, and formalized summarizers for each meeting. The meetings are monitored and adjusted for quality of implementation. Student performance data, instructional practices, and ongoing curriculum review and revision are components of all PLC activities. A leader described PLCs as a "major focus" for guiding all improvement initiatives related to student learning. A PLC rubric is used to ensure the meetings align with clear expectations. Analysis of student performance data is an expectation for all PLC meetings. Data team meetings include protocols for teachers and leaders to share best practices and successful strategies. In addition to the formal PLC meetings, collaboration among all stakeholder groups is a norm within the system. Board members described collaborative decision-making practices in all deliberations related to board policies and organizational effectiveness. The Response to Intervention (RtI) and the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) rely on the collaboration of all staff to identify students who need remediation and special accommodations to meet individual learning needs. The intentional and focused practices for staff to communicate about successfully meeting student and operational needs were highlighted in all interviews. The organizational structure of the central office staff lends itself to collaboration. The designation of areas of responsibility among the central office personnel encourages collaboration and teamwork. Each central office leader is assigned as a point of contact to individual schools. This practice supports open communication and provides a layer of support for school leaders and teachers. The annual Camp Bulloch, held in the summer, ensures system and school leaders review student performance data and information about organizational effectiveness to work together to

review and revise key improvement priorities and align strategies to address the goals. Professional development activities are aligned to the goals and objectives in the improvement plans to ensure teachers and staff have the training and pedagogical knowledge to successfully implement new strategies and practices. Peer observations encourage collaboration among teachers. The peer observations give teachers opportunities to observe classes in a non-evaluative manner and learn from one another. Although walk-throughs and peer observations are expected practices to encourage collaboration among instructional staff, the team noted the practices are not consistently implemented in all schools. Leaders are encouraged to expand opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers in order to learn from peers about successful instructional practices within each building. The PLC process is an embedded practice in the system; however, the team encourages leaders to collect, analyze, and use data from the evaluation of the process to further strengthen the practice.

The system exemplifies innovation in resource management through sound fiscal practices. The funding model adopted by the school system and approved by the governing board empowers schools to use resources for their specific needs. Autonomy is given to building principals in staffing and resource allocation decisions. System-level leaders monitor the allocation of resources and provide oversight of the process. The school board engages in all decisions related to finances, approving the budget, and providing oversight in the allocation of all funding. Board members indicated the current fund balance maintained by the system reflects sound fiscal planning. Principals are trained in the budgeting process and utilize budget spreadsheets to determine effective and efficient use of human, material, and fiscal resources. One leader described the funding process as a “balance of consistency and autonomy.” A long-range facilities plan reflects forward-thinking about new facilities and the maintenance of existing buildings. Demographic studies provide information about anticipated growth, which contributes to long-range planning.

The technology plan includes protocols for purchasing and refurbishing equipment. An intentional focus on the return on the investment is a factor in all decisions related to technology and the addition or replacement of new devices. Technology staff monitors the usage of digital platforms, programs, and dashboards to determine their effectiveness and to inform decisions about the continuation or elimination of the programs and platforms. Although the technology plan includes protocols and practices to monitor the use of devices and programs, a comprehensive process to evaluate the effective integration of technology into instructional practice was not evident to the team. The system demonstrated agility in its ability to quickly transition to online learning in response to covid restrictions. Stakeholders commented that student learning continued because of the ease of the transition from in-person to online learning. The team suggests leaders develop evaluation protocols to monitor the integration of technology devices into instruction and to use the data to inform improvement planning related to technology, platforms, and staff training to support all initiatives.

The system collects multiple points of data; however, a formalized and comprehensive process to ensure it is used to evaluate and transform programs and services is not a fully embedded practice. System and school leaders have access to a tremendous amount of data. Collection and analysis of data are routine practices, but the impact of programs and processes on instructional practice, student learning, and organization are not fully explored. Data about stakeholder perceptions, student performance, and organizational effectiveness are consistently available, but the use of the data to enable leaders to answer the question “How do we know that what we are doing impacts student learning?” is not fully embedded. The system has developed the Bulloch Educators Leading Improvement Efforts toward a Vision of Excellence (BELIEVE) program, which is the foundation for the collection of longitudinal data. Schools track data through Impact Checks, which are submitted to system leaders. In addition to Impact Checks, summary reports include information about changes in student performance results from the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS). Illuminate includes

guided reading data reviewed to determine trend information. Data related to student behavior, attendance, middle school honors data, and subgroup data from the GMAS are maintained as part of the BELIEVE process. The system collects and reviews iReady data to identify trends and comparison information. The BELIEVE format provides a formalized platform to guide the collection and analysis of data; however, the team noted that longitudinal data to determine the impact of programs and services on student achievement and organizational effectiveness to guide improvement planning is not fully explored. The team noted examples of programs that have been implemented in response to data. For example, when student achievement data were analyzed, the implementation of programs to support literacy was identified as a high priority. Camp Bulloch, held each summer, includes specific protocols to review and use data to guide decision-making for the upcoming school year. Data about stakeholder perception, the efficacy of leadership development activities, the impact of evaluation/supervision processes, modeling, coaching, induction, professional learning, and PLCs are collected, but processes to ensure the data are consistently used to monitor for quality program evaluation and identify practices for “strategic abandonment” are inconsistent. The team reviewed the evidence of longitudinal data related to student learning and organizational effectiveness; however, a focus on the use of selective longitudinal data to assist with improvement planning was limited. The team encourages leaders to fully implement the BELIEVE program and identify specific strategies to ensure longitudinal data consistently provide guidance to inform improvement planning. The team suggests that leaders institute deliberate and intentional processes and procedures that ensure continuous improvement is clearly aligned with key priorities and is based on the focused analysis and use of data collected over time.

In conclusion, the themes identified by the Engagement Review Team should be considered along with the rest of the findings from the review as a part of the system’s continuous improvement process. They provide the next steps to guide the improvement journey toward quality and opportunity for all learners. Leaders are encouraged to refer to the key concepts in the Cognia Performance Standards to guide improvement. The team commends the system for its commitment to continuous improvement and is confident it has the capacity to maintain its high level of excellence as it continues to improve learning opportunities for all students.

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/Title |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Holly Wingard, Lead Evaluator | Holly Wingard, a Lead Evaluator for Cognia, currently leads accreditation teams throughout the United States and internationally. She worked as a teacher, counselor, and gifted and talented coordinator. During her 40 plus years in education, she also worked with the assessment department and served on administrative teams. Ms. Wingard earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Georgia and a Master of Education from the University of South Carolina. Her master's plus 30 includes courses taken from the University of South Carolina, Converse College, and The Citadel. Ms. Wingard served on Diagnostic Review Teams in South Carolina and led monitoring and readiness reviews. She has served as a consultant for districts to assist in their preparation for Cognia accreditation reviews. She has also served as a Cognia Accreditation Consultant for North Carolina. Ms. Wingard serves on the Cognia South Carolina Advisory Council. |
| Judith Geter | District School Improvement Specialist |
| Dawn Hadley | Counselor |
| Ashly Hunter | Director, Special Education |
| Anthony Jones | Middle School Principal |
| Stephanie Leggett | Instructional Coach |
| Zelda White | High School Principal |

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