![AdvancED logo]

Accreditation Engagement Review

A Guide for Systems Seeking Accreditation 2017-2018

This brief handbook is designed to help you understand the steps and logistics of the AdvancED® accreditation engagement process for systems.

The AdvancED engagement process represents the unified process for the North Central Association Commission on Engagement and System Improvement (NCA CASI), the Northwest Engagement Commission (NWAC) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Systems Council on Engagement and System Improvement (SACS CASI). Systems seeking to earn and maintain NCA CASI, NWAC or SACS CASI engagement follow the AdvancED Engagement Process.

If you have questions or need assistance during the process, please contact your AdvancED Office. You can find the office nearest you in our directory at www.advanc-ed.org under the "Contact Us" tab.

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Resources and Tools

AdvancED provides a range of support and resources to assist you and your system in your pursuit and maintenance of accreditation.

AdvancED Performance Standards

The AdvancED Performance Standards are the foundation of the engagement process and can be downloaded from the AdvancED website at www.advanc-ed.org/resources. You can log in to the AdvancED network, then select the appropriate page for your type of system to find the appropriate standards.

Resources and Tools

A wide range of useful resources, services and tools for systems are available at www.advanc-ed.org/resources.

AdvancED Office Support

Your AdvancED office provides hands-on support and technical assistance as you engage in the accreditation process. Contact your local office to learn more about the range of services and support available to you. A complete directory of AdvancED offices can be found at www.advanc-ed.org under the "Contact Us" tab.

Introduction to Accreditation

Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed more than 100 years ago by U.S. universities and secondary systems and designed primarily to distinguish systems adhering to a set of educational standards. Today accreditation is used at all levels of education and is recognized for its ability to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education.

Systems seeking to achieve or maintain accreditation understand, honor and embrace the concept of continuous improvement. These systems are engaged every day in an ongoing improvement journey. They are dynamic and continuously evolving, with an unrelenting focus on becoming better on behalf of the students they serve. They operate as learning communities by demonstrating healthy cultures where individuals collectively analyze practices and results, engage in professional learning and dialogue, take meaningful action and assume responsibility for results.

They strengthen engagement. Accredited systems consistently adhere to the AdvancED Standards and engage in review of student performance and stakeholder feedback. As systems continuously improve, they monitor, build capacity and grow more effective in each of these activities.

Systems are encouraged to take advantage of AdvancED's publications, workshops, conferences, web-based resources and on-site technical assistance as they continue on their journey of improvement.

They sustain interest and commitment. Competent and committed educators are the key to sustained improvement. Systems recognize the importance of enhancing the capacity of staff through continued professional learning that is aligned with organizational purpose, improvement goals and improvement priorities. Staff confidence comes from having the knowledge, understanding and skills to thrive while engaging in professional practice. System leaders who create conditions and provide resources to optimize performance and professional growth experience the most success in sustaining improvement.

Successful systems shape a culture of learning, collaboration and high expectations for staff and students and weave it into the fabric of the system. All staff members are encouraged to grow through action, experimentation and reflection. Successes are identified, celebrated and embedded into practice.

Educators are motivated to impact students and make a difference in their lives. Systems that ensure that the connection between engagement initiatives and student learning is established and understood by all stakeholders experience the most success with the engagement process.

They meet AdvancED requirements. Systems seeking to gain or maintain accreditation by AdvancED must meet AdvancED Performance Standards. These Standards focus on systems within a system and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The Standards address preparing students with skills they will need for the future and include high expectations for professional practice. The Standards require demonstrated growth in student learning and achievement and a commitment to developing learning, thinking and life skills for all students.

Systems also must participate in an Engagement Review completed by a team of highly qualified professional evaluators, who examine the system's adherence to AdvancED Standards. This review is the hallmark of the accreditation process and energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of a

system to maintain areas of high performance and tackle those areas that may be thwarting desired performance levels. The Engagement Review is a rigorous process that includes diagnostic analysis, interviews with stakeholders and observations of instruction, learning and operations. The Engagement Review is discussed in detail later in this document.

The Improvement Journey: Responsibilities of the System

Accreditation is based on a five-year term. Though the Engagement Review is a single event, that event includes measuring the degree to which your system is engaged in an **ongoing improvement journey**. The following table outlines how the process describes the responsibilities of your system.

Timing	System's Responsibilities
Every Year	• Maintain membership in the AdvancED Improvement Network. • Engage in ongoing self-analysis and continuous improvement (using the tools in eProve and/or other tools that support your efforts). • Review and adhere to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards, Policies and Procedures. • Document results of improvement efforts. • Update system demographic and contact information. • Notify AdvancED of any substantive changes that may affect how your system meets AdvancED Performance Standards.
Year of Accreditation Engagement Review	• Work with the Lead Evaluator to establish the review schedule and make arrangements for the team. • Host the Engagement Review Team. • Share the findings from the Engagement Review report with your community. • Act on the team's Improvement Priorities from the report.

Prior to the Accreditation Engagement Review	• Upload into eProve workspace Shared Folder up to six months but no later than four weeks prior to the Engagement Review, the results from the following improvement tools (AdvancED Certified or approved alternative):
	    o System Quality Factors Diagnostic
	    o School Quality Factors Diagnostic for each institution
	    o Climate/Culture Surveys (students, parents, educators)
	    o Inventories (students and educators)
	    o eleot classroom observations
	    o Improvement plan/Strategic Plan

After the Accreditation Engagement Review	• Review and discuss the findings from the Engagement Review with all stakeholders. • Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the Powerful Practices section of the Engagement Review Report to maximize their impact on the system. • Develop action plans to address the Improvement Priorities offered by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the Improvement Priorities. Lack of progress can impact accreditation status. You should also address Opportunities for Improvement. • Use the report to guide and strengthen efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness. • Continue to meet the AdvancED Performance Standards and engage in continuous improvement and document results.

Engaging in the Improvement Journey

AdvancED's eProve diagnostic suite offers a comprehensive yet simple and convenient way of identifying your system's strengths and challenges.

Diagnostic results are an important part of the AdvancED Engagement Review process, but AdvancED's intent is for your system to use eProve for continuous improvement.

Role of the System Facilitator

Often the leader of the system assigns a senior staff member to facilitate the accreditation process for the system. The System Facilitator:

- Serves as the key point of contact between AdvancED and the system
- Works with the Lead Evaluator to prepare for and host the Engagement Review
- Oversees the accreditation management for the system including working with institutions
- Supports stakeholders throughout the process; answers questions and provides guidance
- Ensures that all requirements for accreditation are met
- Manages the logistics and oversees the schedule of the Engagement Review

eProve

AdvancED created eProve to support your system improvement planning framework and engagement in continuous improvement. Both AdvancED accreditation and continuous improvement are processes built upon systems thinking. The eProve system provides resources and tools for systems in developing informed improvement plans and to manage ongoing continuous improvement processes. All systems in the AdvancED Improvement Network have access to eProve and should use the tools in eProve regularly.

Understanding and Leveraging eProve Diagnostics

Your system should engage in an ongoing internal review to determine the current status of your system, including needs, goals and areas of successful improvement. During your improvement journey, your system also should focus on collecting and analyzing data concerning 1) Perspectives (stakeholder perceptions about your system gathered through surveys, interviews, or other techniques), 2) Experiences (activities your stakeholders engage in on a regular basis), and 3) Data Analysis (ongoing collection, analysis and use of data, particularly concerning student performance and organizational effectiveness). AdvancED provides a host of tools to accomplish these tasks in eProve, and we encourage you to use them. Among the many diagnostics and surveys available in eProve, the System Quality Factors (SQF) diagnostic and the School Quality Factors Diagnostic (SQF) are designed to facilitate a collaborative process of internal reflection and assessment of your system's current reality. The SQF Diagnostics can be used as often as needed as a reflective process but is only submitted once prior to the Engagement Review for both systems and its institutions.

Conducting eProve surveys and inventories

The purpose and value of surveys is to gain an understanding of what key stakeholders believe about the quality and experience of schooling. AdvancED provides an array of valid and reliable surveys that a system can deploy to learn and gather stakeholder perspective.

The purpose and value of inventories is to gain an understanding of what key stakeholders experience within the school community. Stakeholder experiences reveal how the processes, practices, and conditions of schooling impact learners, parents and educators.

Observing Student Engagement using eProve eleot®

Student engagement of the learning environment is a critical school quality indicator. eProve eleot® provides educators with a research-based instrument to learn and understand how learners engage the learning environment in their school. The results of elect can inform and guide instructional design and delivery to improve the learner experience and performance. Systems (and its institutions) that are currently accredited have access to eleot for their own use. Contact your local Operations Office for additional details and support.

Administering the SQF in prove diagnostics

The System/School Quality Factors (SQF) diagnostics are built on seven factors concerning change in a system's culture, conditions, processes, practices and actions. The SQF is also an effective way for schools and systems to organize and focus reflections on their improvement journey. As a system/school utilizes the SQF for the first time, staff members are encouraged to become familiar with the SQF diagnostic through a review of the factors and questions within the SQF.

A review of the SQF will help you determine the information and data analysis you need to engage in a data-driven process of internal reflection and assessment of your current reality. This analysis and reflection will guide the identification of strengths and areas of need that provide the necessary data for successful improvement planning. In addition, the SQF enables you to add narrative insights or a summary related to each of the factors. (The narrative is the ability for your system to capture what you have learned through the analysis of data related to each factor.) You will also have the ability to add relevant attachments for each factor that would be useful for the system to use as a part of the ongoing improvement journey.

AdvancED recommends that your leadership team complete the SQF only after collecting data from your other data sources, including results of surveys, inventories and assessments.

Use of Alternative Tools

AdvancED strongly encourages and expects systems to use the certified, valid and reliable tools and resources. AdvancED Certified Content provides a system with the ability to benchmark their results with systems throughout the AdvancED Improvement Network. Benchmarking is a valuable tool that provides systems with the ability to understand their results in a greater context and gives access to the performance and experiences of systems throughout the network.

In the event a system desires to use their own custom content they have two options which require approval by AdvancED. First, the system may enter the content into eProve. Although the results cannot be benchmarked in the Improvement Network, the system can use the results with analytical tools available in the eProve platform. Second, the system can seek approval of using its own tools independent of eProve which requires AdvancED approval. The results must be uploaded to eProve workspace. However, the data will not be able to be used with the improvement analytical tools in eProve or benchmarked with systems

in the AdvancED Improvement Network. Please contact your local AdvancED office if you wish to have AdvancED review and approve tools that are independent of eProve.

Guidelines for Administering eProve Tools

Resource	Purpose	Guideline	Time to Complete
Surveys	To gain an understanding of what key stakeholders BELIEVE about the quality and experience of schooling.	At least 10% of population being surveyed with at least an N>20.	Two weeks for administration.
Inventories	To gain an understanding of what key stakeholders EXPERIENCE within the school community.	At least 10% of population being surveyed with at least an N>20.	Two weeks for administration.
Observation of Learning Environment (eleot)	To observe student engagement in the learning environment.	At least 10% of the classrooms observed across grade levels or content areas with at least an N >20.*	Three weeks for observations.
Quality Factors Diagnostic	To conduct a self-assessment of the practices and conditions that impact the quality of the school community.	To be completed by the system and school leadership or improvement teams in a collaborative process.	Following the administration of the inventories, surveys and observations (which can be done concurrently), the team should complete this in four weeks.

*Systems with 20 or fewer classrooms should have observations from all classrooms.

The Engagement Review

The information below provides a general understanding of the purpose and functions of the Engagement Review. Your system has the support of your local AdvancED office and the Lead Evaluator should you have questions.

Your local AdvancED office is available to support you and your system with all aspects of the improvement journey, including your accreditation Engagement Review. AdvancED encourages you to use your AdvancED office as your partner in your continuous improvement efforts.

The AdvancED Lead Evaluator also is available to support you and your system. As the Engagement Review date approaches, you will work closely with the Lead Evaluator to:

• Establish the review schedule
• Coordinate logistics for the review team
• Address any questions and/or concerns related to review preparation
• Ensure the system is ready for the on-site review

Developing the Review Schedule

The system's leader or designee (whom AdvancED refers to as the System Facilitator) works with the Engagement Review Lead Evaluator to develop the review schedule. System reviews last a minimum of two full days. A sample schedule can be found on the page for your particular type of system by first visiting http://www.advanc-ed.org/resources, then choosing your type of system.

The following is an overview of key components of an Accreditation Engagement Review:

- Off-site Preparation of the Accreditation Engagement Review Team
    - o Accreditation Engagement Review Team meeting(s)
- Evening Before Review
    - o Engagement Review Team preparation
    - o May include system overview
- First Morning of On-site Review
    - o System overview (if not begun or completed the previous evening)
        - System's leader provides general overview of the system to the Engagement Review Team
        - Leadership team or other system personnel provide a brief presentation on the current state of the system
- Activities Ongoing Throughout the Review
    - o Interviews (individuals and small groups)
    - o Review of results from completed improvement tools (in eProve and any additional documents provided)
    - o Classroom observations
    - o General observations around the system
    - o Professional deliberations
- Closing Meeting with the Leader/Leadership Team

    o Meeting between Lead Evaluator and system's leader to review the team's findings

Off-site Preparation of the Engagement Review Team

The Accreditation Engagement Review Team assigned to your system will meet at least once in advance of the on-site portion of your review. The format is usually an online meeting, but in some cases, face-to-face meetings are arranged. The purpose of these meetings is to review processes and procedures and discuss evidence provided by your system in the Workspace portion of eProve. This is why it is imperative that you have your SQF diagnostic and supporting evidence uploaded into eProve at least four weeks before the on-site review.

Evidence

In completing the System Quality Factors Diagnostic, the system is given the opportunity to share evidence that supports the criteria in the diagnostic. Systems are expected to present quality evidence that is linked to the process and progress of their improvement efforts as each relates to the items in the System Quality Factors Diagnostic.

Quality evidence is defined as evidence that:

- is clearly aligned to improvement efforts.
- validates or verifies results of improvement efforts or actions.
- is representative of actions over time.
- includes perspectives and input from all stakeholders.

Choosing which pieces of evidence to attach to a criteria item in the System Quality Factors Diagnostic can be a challenge. Ensure that the evidence is clearly linked and supportive of the particular item in the diagnostic. For example, a system focusing on updating curriculum for elementary science may provide the following evidence to support this improvement effort:

- Baseline data used to determine the curriculum needed to be an improvement focus (i.e., student achievement results, perspectives of students, teachers and /or parents).
- Documentation of the processes used for selecting the curriculum committee, writing the new standards and selecting materials to be used in the classroom.
- Documentation of professional learning provided to support the implementation of the new curriculum. Sign in sheets are typically only verification of attendance and do not represent impact. Feedback from participants receiving training and data collected during follow-up observations are more relevant methods of representing the impact of the action.
- Comparative data, including student achievement results and perspectives from students, teachers and parents after implementation and over time.

This set of data would verify that the improvement effort was needed, included perspectives from relevant stakeholders, was implemented using research-based processes and had an impact on students.

Other components of the process may be relevant and could be provided, but you should not provide more than what is necessary to support the system's analysis of the diagnostic item.

You may wish to include other information about your system's accomplishments, challenges, strengths and areas you have identified for improvement. Often this information in summarized in a slide deck presented to the team during the opening session with your leadership team. Having copies of these documents before any of these presentations is very helpful to the Engagement Review Team. Any documentation that supports the effectiveness and efficiency of the operation of your system (policies, practices, budgets, quality assurance reports, and similar documents) are helpful as well.

Examples of faculty or parent meeting agendas, raw assessment data and detailed documentation about operations is of little value to the Engagement Review Team unless they need to investigate a specific issue or concern. In these cases, the Lead Evaluator will ask your Facilitator to find and present these requests.

The System Overview

At the beginning of the Engagement Review, the system's leader should welcome the Engagement Review Team and provide an overview of the system. The purpose of the leader's remarks is to set the tone and context for the review. The following questions are designed to assist your leader in thinking about the type of content to include in his/her remarks:

- What will help the team quickly gain an understanding of our system's challenges, strengths and opportunities?
- What information will best convey what our system is trying to accomplish for students?
- How is our system meeting the needs of its students – currently and over time?
- What do we want the team to look for?
- What advice or support would we like the team to provide in the report?

Team members find it most helpful when the system leader's comments include an overview of the system's vision, brief demographic information about the system, a description of achievement and challenges, an overview of key programs and improvement initiatives, and a snapshot of student performance results using multiple measures over time.

The leader's overview should last no more than 30 minutes. It is helpful to provide team members with a copy of the leader's comments (slide deck or notes) for reference throughout the review.

Following the leader's overview, you may wish for your leadership team or other staff to present a brief presentation on the current state of your system. This presentation should focus on your system's improvement journey including what you have learned from the various tools employed to guide the journey such as survey, inventory, eleot observations and the System Quality Factors Diagnostic. The following questions are designed to assist your leadership team in thinking about the type of content to include in their remarks:

- What data from the various improvement tools do we wish to highlight, focus on, or clarify?
- What artifacts do we wish to bring to the team's attention that help demonstrate the system's ongoing commitment to the improvement journey?
- What do we most want the team to know about how our system meets the AdvancED Performance Standards?

- What processes and practices do we wish to explain that demonstrate how our system is truly engaged in and committed to continuous improvement and worthy of accreditation?
- What do we want the team to look for and/or clarify with regard your system's strategic direction and improvement efforts?

Activities Ongoing throughout the Review

The information below may help you in providing the Accreditation Engagement Review Team the resources and materials they need to conduct a successful review.

Additional Evidence or Information

Your Lead Evaluator may contact your Facilitator to ask for additional specific documents before the on-site portion of the review. Once the on-site portion of the review begins, the Lead Evaluator may ask for additional documentation based on findings from interviews and observations. (This does not mean you did not provide adequate information beforehand. In some cases, documentation is needed simply to verify through multiple sources that certain activities or practices are in place.)

Interview Polls/Interviews

The purpose of the interview Polls is to provide an opportunity for the Engagement Review Team to gather information from a variety of stakeholders about their collective perceptions of your system. Your Lead Evaluator will work with you to determine if group interviews are applicable to your Engagement Review, and when and where individual and group interviews will take place. Interviewees may include leadership and improvement team, teachers, parents and community members, support staff and students.

Setting up interviews. The leader and/or System Facilitator, with support from the system leadership team, invites and schedules stakeholders to be interviewed as part of a group or individually by members of the Engagement Review Team. However, be aware that team members also may choose to conduct very brief impromptu individual or small group interviews with students, staff, parents and even visitors to your system. Group interviews will take approximately 45 minutes. Individual interviews will take approximately 15 minutes with the exception of interviews with individual board members and the superintendent.

Structure of the interviews and questions asked for scheduled interviews. Interviews begin with a brief overview of the purpose of the interviews and the role of the Engagement Review Team. The interview will focus on questions and discussions about the work of the system. Interview Polls have been designed with specific questions/responses and may be used as a springboard for further discussions during interviews.

Selecting Interviewees. The following guidelines are designed to help the System Facilitator in inviting stakeholders to be interviewed, if applicable. Before proceeding with invitations, you should confirm the interview groups with your Lead Evaluator.

Stakeholders should collectively:

- Reflect the system's broader community (socioeconomic levels, race and ethnicity, neighborhoods served by the system, etc.)
- Provide a range of viewpoints and perspectives (strong and active supporters of the system,

critics of the system, those who are less involved, etc.)

- Invite parents and community members to participate that are not employed by your system or system
- Represent all levels and departments in the system (e.g., different grade levels and different subject areas)
- Represent all major categories of positions in the system (e.g., leadership, administrative, teaching, guidance and support functions)
- Include individuals who can discuss the system's strengths and challenges

The overarching questions to ask when identifying stakeholders to be interviewed are:

- Will the stakeholders collectively provide an accurate assessment of the system for the Engagement Review Team?
- Do the stakeholders collectively have enough knowledge of the system's practices with regard to the AdvancED Standards to yield meaningful information?
- Will the stakeholders collectively yield information that will prove valuable to the system in its continuous improvement efforts?

While it may be tempting to identify only those stakeholders who are active and strong supporters of the system, it does not maximize the insights and richness of the findings that can ultimately benefit the system's improvement efforts.

Inviting Interviewees. The Leader and/or System Facilitator should begin inviting stakeholders to be interviewed as soon as it has finalized the review schedule (approximately six weeks prior to the review). The following is sample language that can be adapted and used as appropriate when inviting stakeholders to participate in the interviews.

Sample Invitation to Potential Interviewees

Dear (Insert Name),

You are cordially invited to participate in (name of System)'s upcoming Accreditation Engagement Review.

(name of System)'s Engagement Review will take place (dates). The review is led by a team of professional evaluators. During the review, the Engagement Review Team conducts interviews with a range of system stakeholders, reviews system documents, student performance data, and makes professional observations about the quality of (name of your system). The team shares its findings with leaders and makes an accreditation recommendation for review by AdvancED Councils. We will use the findings from the team to further our continuous improvement efforts.

On (date), the Engagement Review Team will be interviewing several stakeholder groups and individuals. We would like to invite you to participate in the interview process. Please join us at (time) in (location). The interview will last approximately 45 minutes.

We believe that you have experience, knowledge and insights that would enhance the team's understanding of our system. Please reply to this invitation by (date). I look forward to your participation in this exciting and valuable process.

Sincerely,

Preparing Interviewees. After stakeholders accept the invitation to serve on an interview team, the system sends a brief note to confirm the interview date, time and location. The confirmation note should emphasize the importance of arriving on time. The note should repeat some of the information from the invitation letter that highlights the purpose and activities of the team. Depending on the stakeholder being interviewed, you may wish to include supporting materials, such as a copy of the system's SQF diagnostic.

Classroom Observations

During the Engagement Review, team members will observe a variety of classrooms using the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot®). The purpose of eleot is to help the team identify and document observable evidence of classroom environments that are conducive to student learning. If you have already used eleot as a data collection tool for your self-analysis, include the results of your observations in the Shared Folder in eProve™ Workspace. The team will use your results, as well as their own, to corroborate information obtained from interviews, artifacts and student performance data. Lasting a minimum of 20 minutes, the observations provide an opportunity to see how improvement initiatives are translated into the classroom and to view their impact on students. The observations allow the team to check for alignment from the administrative to the classroom level.

The leader and/or System Facilitator should notify teachers that the team may observe their classrooms during the review. The leader and/or System Facilitator should explain the purpose of the observations, emphasizing that the team is observing processes and activities in the system; they are not evaluating teachers. Team members are instructed to be as unobtrusive as possible and to not disrupt the learning process. Teachers should conduct class as usual.

General Observations Around the System

In addition to the classroom observations using eleot, team members will also conduct informal observations throughout the system. This may include resource rooms, the library or media center, and technology labs, as well as informal observations of interactions in non-instructional environments such as hallways, playgrounds or the cafeteria. These general observations provide data regarding the overall culture and climate of the system.

Professional Deliberations

Throughout the review, the Lead Evaluator and team members engage in professional deliberations regarding the data collected through interviews, observations and artifacts. The team uses diagnostic tools to engage in professional deliberations regarding the system's adherence and commitment to AdvancED Standards. These deliberations support the ongoing improvement journey of the system through the presentation of the team's findings and the Engagement Review report.

Preparing for the Presentation of the Engagement Review Team's Findings

When the team has finished its deliberations and determined its findings, the Lead Evaluator meets with the leader and any staff members he/she designates to participate in the meeting to hear the team's findings. The System Facilitator schedules the meeting time and location and ensures all participants are informed of the meeting. The meeting provides an opportunity for the Lead Evaluator to discuss the team's findings with the leader, answer questions and address any concerns.

Coordinating Team Logistics

Your leader and System Facilitator are responsible for coordinating the logistics associated with the Engagement Review. The following checklist is intended to assist with this task:

- Coordinate morning and evening transportation for the team members to and from the system and other locations as needed for each day of the review.
- Secure hotel room reservations for team members as necessary.
- Make all meal arrangements for the team for each day of their stay (and coordinate any necessary transportation needs).
- Reserve meeting space at the hotel or system for each night of the review. The meeting room should be organized as a hollow square, with enough chairs to accommodate all members of the team. Reliable Internet access, a screen, LCD projector, power cords (2-3), flip chart paper (at least one full pad), markers (at least one for every member of the team), masking tape and sticky notes (standard square size, at least one pad for each member of the team) should be provided. Water and light refreshments are appreciated.
- Reserve a team meeting room at the system where the team can work, discuss their findings and review artifacts. The room should include reliable Internet access and power cords for multiple computers.
- Secure rooms for the interviews, if applicable.
- Make name badges for the team members, including any security clearances needed, and ensure that system personnel wear their name badges.
- Please note that team members are not allowed to accept gifts from the system (Pens, pads and other items of nominal value, with or without the system's logo, that will assist the team with their work are acceptable.) Please refer to AdvancED Accreditation Policy 2.03(b).

Final Preparations

The following is a checklist to help the system address final details and arrangements for the Engagement Review Team.

- At least a week prior to the Engagement Review, confirm all details related to the schedule and check in with the Lead Evaluator.
- Ensure that all stakeholders involved in the review have a copy of the Engagement Review Team schedule.
- Email and/or send a reminder to all interviewees, if applicable.
- Confirm lodging reservations for the team, if applicable.
- Confirm air and ground transportation arrangements for each team member, including special requirements such as international travel visas, vaccinations, immigration or entry

requirements, if applicable.
- Confirm meals and dinner reservations for the team.

Hosting the Engagement Review Team

The review schedule serves as the primary guide for the review. A sample Engagement Review schedule is available at www.advanc-ed.org/systemsresources. The leader and/or System Facilitator manage the schedule and ensure all activities of the review occur as planned. The leader and/or System Facilitator should maintain the schedule and extra copies at all times during the review. He/she should be available for questions and to help the team access needed information throughout the review. It is a good idea for the leader and System Facilitator to provide the Lead Evaluator and members with his/her contact information (including cell phone number) and the names and contact information of other system staff, should questions or emergencies arise. Providing the contact information of a clinic or hospital the school works with is also appreciated in the event of any team member requires medical attention.

Attending to the Details

Once the Engagement Review Team has arrived, the System Facilitator ensures all details unfold as planned. Below is a sample of activities for a three-day review.

Arrival and Orientation:
- Confirm lodging and dinner reservations for the team, if applicable.
- Provide team members with hard copies of any information needed for the review, name badges, a final schedule, maps, floor plans, and any other additional materials team members may need.
- Check to see that the meeting room for the team's evening orientation is properly set up per the Lead Evaluator's requirements, which may include Internet access, include flip charts, sticky notes, markers, masking tape, LCD projector, power cords, screen, any system artifacts that the system wants in the team's work room, water and refreshments.

Day One:
- Ensure all team members have transportation to the system.
- Make sure the team's meeting room at the system is ready and meets the team's needs.
- Ensure easy access to artifacts the team will need.
- Manage the schedule and ensure that all activities stay on schedule.
- Provide lunch for the team.
- Make coffee, water and light refreshments available throughout the day for the team.
- Provide transportation to and from the hotel, if needed.
- Ensure dinner reservations are confirmed and transportation is provided, if needed.
- Ensure that the team's meeting room at the hotel (if applicable) is ready for the team.

Day Two:
- Ensure all team members have transportation to the schools selected for onsite reviews (announced). For unannounced visits, have transportation available once the school sites have been announced.
- Manage the schedule and ensure that all activities stay on schedule.

- Make arrangements for team members for lunch at school sites.
- Make available coffee, water and light refreshments throughout the day for the team.
- Prepare for the final meeting between the Lead Evaluator, leader and any designated staff.
- Ensure team members' transportation needs are addressed.

Day Three:
- Ensure all team members have transportation to the system as well as transportation to the airport following the Review (for out of state members).
- Manage the schedule and ensure that all activities stay on schedule.
- Make arrangements for team members for lunch.
- Make available coffee, water and light refreshments throughout the day for the team.
- Prepare for the final meeting between the Lead Evaluator, leader and any designated staff.
- Ensure team members' transportation needs are addressed.

Keys to a Successful Review

Systems that have hosted Engagement Reviews offer the following advice to their colleagues:

- **Be open and honest with the team**. The more authentic and accurate your responses are to the team, the better able the team is to assess the strengths and needs of the system.
- **Stay on schedule**. Use the Engagement Review schedule to guide the progress of the review.
- **Communicate with all stakeholders about the review**. The more people who know about the review and the activities of the team, the better. Be as open and transparent about the process as possible.
- **Use and refer to the SQF**. The SQF is the most valuable guidebook for the review process. Reference it regularly with the Engagement Review Team to maximize the team's time and their ability to provide meaningful feedback to the system.
- **Share and encourage the team to review specific artifacts** that you feel are critical to the team's understanding of your system.
- **Highlight the areas where you need the team's assistance**. The sooner the team considers the challenges the system is facing, the more time the team has to craft powerful required actions to support the system in addressing those challenges.
- **Remember that you and your system will get out of the process what you put into it**. The system has the ability, through its own commitment to the process, to make the most of the Engagement Review. The more committed the system is to gaining valuable support and feedback from peers, the more likely a meaningful Engagement Review becomes.

Continuing the Journey

While the majority of this handbook is devoted to the Accreditation Engagement Review, the majority of the system's time is spent following the review, acting on the team's findings and continuing the improvement journey. This section reviews the key activities that occur on an ongoing basis as you maintain your processes of continuous improvement.

The Written Report of the Engagement Review Team

After the conclusion of the Engagement Review, the Lead Evaluator works with the team to finalize the written report of the team's findings. The report is submitted for review and acceptance to the local AdvancED office. The system receives the draft report within about 20 working days of the review.

You will receive notification that the report is accessible in the eProve Workspace Shared Folder. You will also receive information on interpreting and using the results of the Engagement Review Report.

Upon receipt of the written report, you should communicate the Engagement Review Team's findings to internal and external stakeholders. Sharing the results of the review with a wide range of stakeholders helps educate the broader community about the system's accreditation, engagement in continuous improvement, and garners stakeholder buy-in with regard to next steps your system will take to respond to the findings in the report.

Notice of Accreditation, IEQ™ and Celebrating with the Community

The Lead Evaluator submits the Engagement Review Team's report to AdvancED for local Council and national review and subsequent action. Consistent with the focus of engagement on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED has introduced an innovative framework for revealing system performance called the Index of Education Quality™ (IEQ). Your system will receive an IEQ score along with an accreditation status. If your system fails to meet established criteria, your accreditation will be considered "under review," and requiring frequent monitoring by AdvancED. You will receive more information about the IEQ after your report has received final approval.

The AdvancED Accreditation Commission, the body that grants accreditation, reviews and acts on all accreditation recommendations. After the Commission has taken action on your system's accreditation, you will receive a letter confirming your system's accreditation status. Upon receiving the accreditation letter, you should communicate the final results to internal and external stakeholders.

Your system will receive and should proudly display your certificate of accreditation. Press releases, flags, Q&A guides and more are available to help systems share and celebrate their accreditation with their community. Practices many systems find useful include: sharing information about their engagement with parents at every parent meeting through brochures and/or handouts; displaying the AdvancED accreditation seal on the system's website, stationery and student transcripts; posting information about accreditation in a regular column of system newsletters; and including a section on accreditation and its importance in annual reports to the community.

Acting on the Engagement Review Team's Findings

The Engagement Review Team report will serve as a resource to you as your system furthers its continuous improvement efforts. Be sure to celebrate and strengthen the successes and accomplishments noted in the team's Powerful Practices. Make it your goal to build on these accomplishments, enhancing their impact across your system.

The Improvement Priorities identify areas of needed action designed to enhance system effectiveness and improve student learning. Your system will be held accountable for making progress on each of the team's Improvement Priorities. . You will be expected to provide a summary of your actions, evidence

and results related to each Improvement Priority at the time of your next regularly scheduled Accreditation Engagement Review.

To begin acting on the team's findings, review the full team report with system stakeholders. In addition to spending time discussing the team's Powerful Practices and Improvement Priorities, study the descriptions of strengths and Opportunities for Improvement provided. These descriptions provide greater clarity, guidance and direction on the Powerful Practices and Improvement Priorities. Should questions arise during this process, seek clarity from the Engagement Review Lead Evaluator and/or your local AdvancED Office.

After you and your team have thoroughly reviewed the Engagement Review Team's findings, you should establish a plan of action by engaging representative stakeholders in the process. The plan typically outlines next steps related to the team's findings, including actions to sustain Powerful Practices and clear strategies for addressing Improvement Priorities. In addition, your plan should include implementation strategies and methods for monitoring, documenting and analyzing results.

Implement the strategies you have selected for responding to the team's finding, track the progress your system is making and be prepared to answer the questions, "What steps have been taken? What progress has been made? How do you know you've made an impact?"

Conclusion

Congratulations on your commitment to accreditation. Your engagement in the continuous improvement and accreditation process will enhance all elements of your system. Your system will become more sophisticated as a system, as your understanding of systems improvement increases. The entire system, community and, most importantly, students benefit as the system works to improve its systems and processes to increase system-wide effectiveness and enhance student learning.

We hope this handbook has been helpful, and we welcome any feedback you have on improving its usefulness. Please feel free to share your thoughts with our Operations Management Team by emailing your comments to oms@advanc-ed.org.

AdvancED looks forward to supporting you throughout the system accreditation process.