



# Oral Exit Report Quality Assurance Review Team

*District Accreditation*

*Auburn City Schools*



# What does district accreditation involve?

- **The capacity of a school system to address three major elements. As such, a school system must:**
  - Meet standards for accreditation;
  - Demonstrate a systemic and continuous process of improvement; and
  - Implement methods that provide for quality assurance.

# Role and Responsibilities

## Quality Assurance Review

- **Assess the capacity of the system to meet the standards;**
- **Assess the efficacy and impact of the improvement process;**
- **Assess the effectiveness of the system's methods for quality assurance;**
- **Identify strengths of the system deserving of commendation; and**
- **Develop recommendations which are designed to help strengthen the school system.**

- **The Quality Assurance Review Team**
  - Reviewed documentation provided by the school system;
  - Developed points of inquiry for the on-site review;
  - Established, in collaboration with district personnel, a schedule of activities and interactions that would provide for significant stakeholder involvement;
  - Conducted interviews of a representative set of stakeholders throughout the district; and
  - Engaged in professional deliberations as a team to consider the capacity of the school system to meet the requirements for district accreditation.

- **During the on-site Quality Assurance Review, team members interviewed:**
  - Superintendent of Schools
  - 5 members of the Board of Education
  - 10 members of central office staff
  - 9 Principals
  - 21 Administrators (district and school levels)
  - 92 parents and business partners
  - 94 teachers
  - 43 students

# Evidential Process

- **In considering the evidence as provided through data, documentation, observation, and dialogue, the Quality Assurance Team**
  - Sought a district perspective;
  - Pursued evidence that could be correlated through multiple sources;
  - Examined the context and capacity of the school system in relation to its vision, mission, and beliefs; and
  - Applied the criteria for accreditation.

# Summary of our Observations

- **Strengths**...conditions that exist which benefit the school district.
- **Achievements**...recent accomplishments achieved by the school district.
- **Commendations**...professional commendations by the Quality Assurance Review Team.
- **Limitations**...conditions that exist which are potential barriers.
- **Challenges**...opportunities that the district may seek to address for further improvement.
- **Recommendations**...professional recommendations by the Quality Assurance Review Team.

# Strengths

- **Collaboratively developed district and school improvement plans**
- **High expectations for students**
- **Informed and committed Board of Education**
- **Involved and supportive parents and community stakeholders**
- **Focused, collaborative, and highly trained professional staff**
- **Pervasive awareness of the district's vision and mission among stakeholders**
- **Forward thinking leadership that anticipates needs and challenges**
- **Visionary superintendent**
- **Positive board-superintendent-staff relationships**
- **Commitment to continuous improvement focused on student achievement**
- **Sense of pride that is embedded throughout the system**
- **Strong financial resources to support educational programs**
- **Mutual respect/support between ACS and the Auburn City Government**
- **Extensive collaborative relationships between ACS and Auburn University**



# Accomplishments

- **Built an understanding and knowledge of the system's vision, mission, and beliefs at all levels.**
- **Demonstrated commitment at all levels to the strategies and practices that support and drive success.**
- **Provided individual schools with the necessary autonomy to address unique needs while pursuing the system's vision and mission.**
- **Committed to continually seeking stakeholder perspective through surveys and community forums.**
- **Focused on the use, understanding, and application of data to drive improvements**
- **Employed curriculum directors for both elementary and secondary education**
- **Made extensive use of technology for both teaching and learning**
- **Provided an extensive fine arts curriculum at all levels**



# Commendations

- **The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the Auburn City Schools for:**
    - **Building understanding and commitment of stakeholders to the district's vision, mission, and beliefs**
    - **Developing a commitment to enhance teacher effectiveness in all classrooms**
    - **Embracing diversity as a strength**
    - **Building the capacity throughout the system to engage in a continuous pursuit of excellence**
    - **Identifying leadership at both the district and school levels that models expectations and instills confidence in the professional staff that improvement can and will be achieved**
    - **Developing and using technologies that facilitate communication and provide access to information for all stakeholders**
    - **Allocating resources that support the teaching and learning process and that target identified needs for student success**
    - **Securing professional staff throughout the district that embody the vision and demonstrate the commitment to high expectations for all**
    - **Focusing on, believing in, and committing to the whole student**
- Assuring that all student populations are provided equitable educational opportunities**



# Challenges

- **providing necessary resources for the expected continued growth in student population within the district**
- **responding to the unique needs of a growing population of students with special needs**
- **identifying individual student needs through the analysis of student data to impact K-12 instruction**
- **locating alternate funding sources**
- **acquiring land for future school sites**
- **finding effective means of involving hard-to-reach parents in their child's education**

- **The Quality Assurance Review Team recommends that the Auburn City Schools**
  - Identify indicators of expected student achievement that are aligned with the unique *potential* of all students.
  - Expand the use of collaboratively developed common formative assessments.
  - Build a pervasive data culture (collection, analysis, interpretation, use and appreciation of data in school improvement) throughout the district.
  - Explore alternative funding sources for programs/services lost or endangered by the recent failed tax referendum

# Next Steps

- **A written report of our findings and observations will be drafted and sent to the Superintendent of Schools within 30 days.**
- **After receipt of the report, the district is expected to**
  - Review and communicate the findings and observations contained in the report;
  - Initiate steps to address the recommendations in the report;
  - Continue to monitor accreditation requirements for the system and its schools;
  - Monitor the execution and impact of strategies for improvement; and
  - Continue to engage methods that provide for quality assurance.

# Final Recommendation

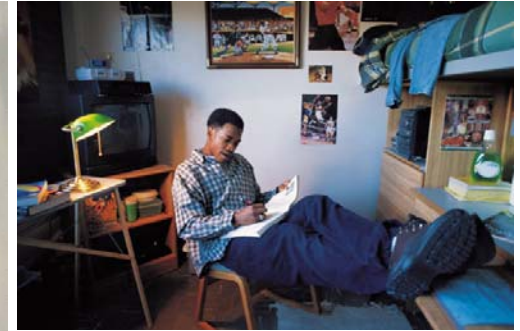
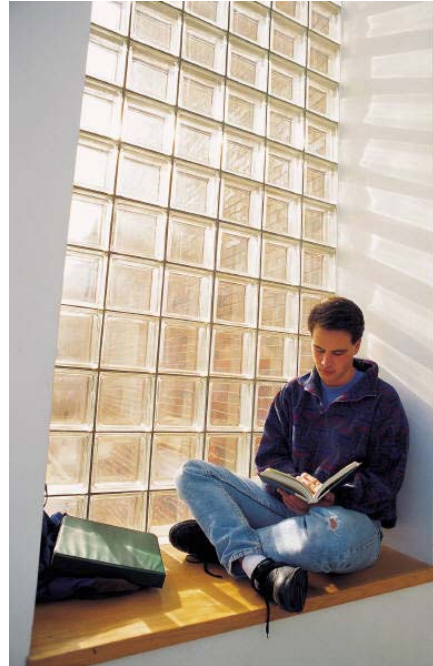
- **The Quality Assurance Review Team recommends, without reservation, to the SACS CASI Board of Directors that the Auburn City Schools be awarded district accreditation as a quality school system.**
- **Once approved, the district and all its schools are thereby accredited.**



# Final Thoughts

- **On behalf of the Quality Assurance Team, I extend:**
  - Our appreciation for your hospitality, support, and professionalism;
  - Our respect and acknowledgment of the quality of the school district; and
  - Our congratulations for achieving district accreditation as a quality system.

*...helping schools  
and school systems  
improve student  
learning through  
accreditation*



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