



# Okaloosa County School District

Niceville, Florida

**February 22 - 25, 2022**

**System Accreditation Engagement Review**

214975

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

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

## 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:	4	
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:	3	EM:	4	
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.										Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4	
3.4	The system attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the system's purpose and direction.										Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	3	EM:	4	
3.5	The system integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.										Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	3	EM:	4	
3.6	The system provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the system.										Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4	
3.7	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the system's purpose and direction.										Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4	

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.

<b>Institution IEQ</b>	<b>382.58</b>	<b>CIN 5 Year IEQ Range</b>	<b>278.34 – 283.33</b>
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## 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 Okaloosa County School District presented a plethora of artifacts to the Engagement Review Team. Interviews with stakeholders and details in the submission equipped the team with an insightful examination of the school's improvement journey. The team identified themes throughout the district: adherence to a code of ethics, leadership, implementation of resources and implementing processes and procedures, professional growth, and data drive. In addition, the team noted a general improving theme focusing on student leadership and creativity in the classroom. Finally, the school district's fidelity embracing its purpose and mission provides opportunities for individual student growth.

**The governing authority and staff adhere to a code of ethics functioning within roles and responsibilities and develops policies that support operational effectiveness.** The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies designed to support system effectiveness. The School Board Manual, provided in evidence, guides the board on how the system develops, reviews, and revises policies and procedures. Interviews with board members described the compliance of policy reviews aligned with the manual. The school board, district offices, and central office personnel complete the monitoring of applicable laws and regulations. As described by a school board member, "The school board attorney is at all of our board meetings." Individuals within the school board office and district departments are responsible for monitoring compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Legal updates from the Florida School Board Association are reviewed, disseminated, and given insights by the attorney. As described by the central office personnel, each department within the district collects data to monitor and ensure policy adherence. The team heard about and reviewed artifacts that included financial audits, evaluation processes, and health and safety protocols from various internal stakeholders. Their position mandates their following of the protocols. The appropriate personnel monitor information on new directives from the department of education and begin the policy revision process. School Board Policy Manual revisions are a matter of public record and found in board meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and videos. These records are available to the public through the school board website and support the board's and superintendent's position on being transparent. As one school board member described, the superintendent believes that "everyone is important." Employees can feel they are part of the process and feel comfortable giving input. The superintendent creates a culture of "buy-in" by the stakeholders who follow and implement the district policy.

The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities. The school board operates under a written code of ethics as outlined in the School Board Policy Manual, which identifies the general powers of the school board. Five school board members interviewed by the team described their allegiance to the Code of Ethics and their compliance with the state statutes governing the Board of Education. The code of ethics outlines the organizational

roles and responsibilities of all members of the Board of Education and the policies and practices that provide institutional guidance in running the daily operations of the school district. As described by a school board member, “Right now we are in the process of reviewing entire policies (broad-based) within the three-year plan; policies in place to make sure we are doing our part to follow.” In addition, the five elected board members described participation in training offered by the Florida School Board Association, which includes new member training and annual ethics training. The Board of Education maintains certificates of completion. The school board follows the School Board Manual with fidelity, including monitoring conditions for student learning, effective instructional assessments that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences, direction for professional development for all staff, and fiscal management. Meticulous minutes from the board meetings held twice per month, live stream of meetings, recordings, agendas, and the district website provide evidence of continued compliance with high ethical standards. As reported to the team, there have been no ethical misconducts filed against them by the department of education. Individual board members describe the importance of transparency, communicating with stakeholders through social media platforms. “We’re out there so that our community knows what we are doing.” The board discusses student performance and results at board meetings. As described by a board member, “We spend a lot of time on data and how students are progressing.” The board is constantly reviewing data, looking for improvement. They support the proactive approach of the superintendent, bringing the board information to show where the student gains are. Four of the board members are former educators.

Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in teaching and learning. The district encompasses over 936 square miles, offering many programs that prepare students for the military, college, or the workforce. The team heard from the superintendent his vision for the school district, including the Six Pillars of Success: academic excellence, community engagement, continuous learning, modern innovation, safer schools, and student-focused. Accountability is an expectation within his vision, where “everyone is important.” The educational system has been an A+ school district for over seventeen years, defining it as a High Performing School District since 2012. The district provided evidence that identifies the processes and procedures of the departments. These documents include the School Board Manual, district departmental manuals, budget manual, Pupil Progression Plans, Codes of Student Conduct, textbook adoption procedures, Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreement, School Advisory Council (SAC), and the district instructional allocation tool that monitors class size in a “live” format daily, identify when sections need to be opened or closed and determines if a teacher’s sixth period needs to be released. During the interviews, the various departments provided additional information, including the five-year capital outlay plans, the ½ cent sales tax plan, newcomers program and training, professional development, human resources procedures manual, homebound education, school safety, and handbooks for the schools within the district. The superintendent’s cabinet members spoke about formal and informal procedures used to review and revise standard operating procedures, assuring organizational effectiveness in teaching and learning. In addition, individuals throughout the school district are designated responsibility to monitor legislation and municipal information that may impact current school policies. Various department chairs discussed their involvement with the process and described for the team the fluidity of the process, practiced with fidelity. In keeping in line with the district’s ongoing process of monitoring and adjusting, the district is replacing its operations systems with a cloud-based product.

The school district demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and resources supporting the system’s purpose and direction. During interviews with district departments, the team heard that everything “goes back” to the district’s purpose and direction. The superintendent described his Six Pillars of Success, giving practical meaning and direction to all things Okaloosa. Next, the team heard from central office administrators and the business community. They provided additional information about the successful process that captured the positive vote from the community for the ½

cent sales tax initiative. Transparency is essential and was validated by several stakeholder interviews. The 1/2 Cent Sales Tax approval process also includes a third-party agency to conduct a thorough audit. The audit findings guide future facilities, transportation, and technology plans. Finally, the team heard from school board members about the process for approval of the annual budget. The board talks to the department supervisors regarding budget requests and plans for the upcoming year. This process allows for any questions that the board may want to be answered. Afterward, the board approves and follows up throughout the year as to the delivery of the budget.

In looking at the pride of the school district and its A+ rating by the State of Florida, the team suggests that the transparency by which leaders conduct business and the fidelity that they process delivery in all areas of the district continue to focus on its purpose and direction. The superintendent's Six Pillars of Success will provide all stakeholders with an understanding, support, and operational reminder for every aspect within the district.

**The leadership team, including administrators, teachers, community members, and other stakeholders, is committed to providing resources and implementing processes and procedures to support the implementation of the district's purpose, mission, and goals.** The school district commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including learners' expectations. In addition, as heard in multiple stakeholder interviews, the district's vision, mission, and Core Value statements are prevalent throughout. Finally, with the superintendent's ideology that "everyone is important," the district defines its method of engaging stakeholders to support its purpose, mission, and goals. Board members have described the superintendent as "a servant leader of public funds." The team heard about multiple ways of engaging stakeholders through School Advisory Council membership, district steering committee, surveys regarding district improvement, Town Hall meetings with secondary students, workforce development, military base officials and liaison officers, business partnerships, and the Chamber of Commerce. The superintendent also solicits engagement through news briefs, social media, Technology Coast Manufacturing and Engineering Network (TeCMEN) workgroups, and Town Hall meetings. The school board, operating with fidelity and transparency, provides a clear avenue for trust within the stakeholder groups. Collaboration of stakeholders helps decisions come to fruition and builds commitment to the school's purpose, mission, and vision. Initiatives heard by the team and described by stakeholders positively include the 1/2 cent sales tax, career-technical education, and the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) program. Engaging the stakeholders is ongoing and provides a barometer for the district to gauge where it needs to focus.

The team heard that the district regularly provides two-way communication with its stakeholders. Parents and the community expressed that they always had an avenue to talk and discuss with the administration. Technology also supports the engagement of stakeholders, using the district's iOCSD app and other student-driven technology to report grades and work. Engaging stakeholders strengthen the committee; each one shares the purpose, mission, and vision. Feedback and follow-up are practices so that everyone stays engaged. From the superintendent to the principals at the schools, from pre-planning to follow-up, the purpose drives the district's initiatives. Evidence that supports the community's support of the district's purpose includes: passing the 1/2 cent sales tax, advisory boards for Career Technical Education (CTE), parent survey responses, superintendent focus groups, district staff on the economic development, and the use of the dashboard on the website.

The positive results of the district purpose also include an additional staff member to coordinate Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), new parent registration software, a new student data management system, safe school initiatives, single-point entry at most schools, and a webpage devoted to the school board. The superintendent's Six Pillars of Success helped stakeholders understand the strategic plan with clearly outlined school improvement plans for each school to support the district's

goals and mission. The team saw the pride reflected in the zoom meetings. Pride is a positive indicator of acceptance. Interviews of stakeholders further provide feedback for positive support of the school district's purpose, mission, and vision. For example, a board member indicated great pride in serving the community. She said she goes to schools each week to connect and communicate. Another board member stated transparency of decision-making by inviting community members to participate on committees giving public input on issues. The team heard that the board interacts with other elected officials regularly, engaging with families and recognizing and addressing the community's diversity in its decisions. Parents indicated that communication from the schools is effective. They appreciate the various methods used to share information. Likewise, the community and business representatives told the team that their input was valued.

The school district allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the system's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. Beginning with the School Performance Plan process, each school-based educator analyzes school and classroom data. Next, frequent meetings are held, ensuring plans align with the district's purpose and mission. The inclusion of recommendations for participation in state and federal programs and instructional technology provides additional revenue and resources. This is especially true with the increase in CTE enrollment, where CTE programs receive dollars based on the workforce it represents. Then, measurable goals with strategies to achieve the plan are written and evaluated to allocate human, material, and dollars. Next, supervisors establish the financial aspects of the plan, where the school board approves the final budget through their internal processes, including open meetings. Finally, a district and school calendar will be used to determine which resources will be used to support the purpose and goals. The WOLF online system for maintaining requests compiles, prioritizes, and assigns specific personnel responsible for monitoring the resources or funds. Risk management insurance policy renewal and other operational requests are included. Stakeholders described that fiscal planning made by the district reflects a committed and positive use of funds to provide success for students success. The strategic plan was referenced by stakeholders, as they were involved in SAC. The plan guides the next three years in the district, providing fiscal, human, and materials resources. Evidence provided reflects the positive relationship and open communication between the district and stakeholders to pass a ½ cent sales tax which will provide a variety of projects to support the district and community. With the collaborative nature of the business community and the school district, CTE has become a strong focus for students. These CTE programs are developed to fill the gap in the community identified and supported by the business and industry. They will "Grow their own."

The team recognizes the efforts and encourages the further enhancement of community input into planning and implementation through task forces and forums to gain insights, solve problems, and make decisions for short- and long-term projects to enhance teaching, learning, operational effectiveness, facility renovation, and new construction.

**The district uses data to inform and drive decisions.** Data-informed decision-making is evidenced at all levels of the organization, including purposeful and deliberate community involvement. Throughout the review, the team heard from stakeholders that data aligned with the district's purpose and mission and was utilized for the decisions made. For example, when determining the use of resources aligned with academic excellence, the schools and district determined the annual budget based on staff needs and students' academic performance. The system's annual departmental budgets align with projects, programs, and activities that improve teaching and learning. This process includes but is not limited to purchasing textbooks, supplemental resources such as i-Ready, and technology for student use. In addition, when the need for expanding programs for students is determined, stakeholders at every level expressed positive benefits from the expansion of Career and Technical Education programs. The CTE program includes but is not limited to the opportunity for elementary students to participate in the

STEM/CTE learning activities robotics program. The team saw evidence of board meeting agendas, budget reports, and budget workshop agendas. The team heard from board members their process for review of data, which includes focusing on the district's purpose and facilitating open meetings for review and discussion of budgets.

Data are used to inform teaching and learning. Data from online platforms, curriculum software programs, teacher-created assessments, curriculum-based assessments, and state summative assessments are collected and used to measure results, determine student supports, and refine instructional practices. The team heard from each instructional stakeholder the need for a data and evaluation process. Evidence provided included a Data Analysis PowerPoint, a data analysis tool, data chat agendas, schedules, data day agendas, department chair mid-year data review agendas, and district i-Ready data report.

Educators use data to monitor instruction and address learning needs. District and school professional learning provide educators with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to collect, analyze, and adjust learning progress based on student formative and summative data. The team heard that teachers, parents, school administrators, and district administrators review School Performance Plans (SPPs). Key stakeholder groups give feedback at School Advisory Committee (SAC) and board meetings. Evidence included the principal's email data chats, use of formative measures, 8th Gr Pre-AI 1st Quarter formative, and Earth & Space Science Qtr. 4 Assessment. The instructional staff's knowledge regarding the use of data was evident, where they wanted to be heard and proudly talk about their process.

Formative and summative data are collected, analyzed, and used to monitor learning. District Quarterly Data Reviews are in place to review progress-monitoring data from i-Ready and IXL. Data are disaggregated and shared with school administrators and teachers during quarterly data review and walk-through sessions. The team heard that teachers use quarter assessment results to monitor the progress of student mastery of state standards and to identify needs for re-teaching or remediation. Evidence included the Florida Standard Assessment (FSA) Subgroup Needs Analysis, the i-Ready personalized Instruction summary, and the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Process.

Educators monitor and share student progress data impacting standards' mastery. Data charts are used throughout the system to verify learners' progress toward meeting learning goals. Instructional practices are adjusted to address gaps in learners' progress toward meeting learning goals. The team heard from parents serving on School Advisory Committees (SACs) that they review School Performance Plans (SPP) and offer input as needed. The SPP review and development cycle involves multiple meetings, which begin in the spring of each year. Evidence included a Parent Communication Newsletter soliciting involvement, SAC Agenda and minutes, SPP Schedules and minutes, and student diagnostic results letter to parents.

Longitudinal data inform long-range facility needs planning. Budget workshop reports and capital outlay plans informed the need for additional funds to update and modernize school facilities. The team heard from the business community that the district effectively collaborated with community stakeholders to pass the Half-Cent Sales Tax to help address facility project needs. Evidence included the Proposed Capital Outlay Budget and Five Year Work Plan, an email from the interim chief financial officer to the principal (in preparation for the budgeting process), an MS budget screenshot, (MS) WOLF Dashboard with projects, capital outlay projects, and the award-winning School Resource Officer program, co-funded by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department and the school district.

The team commends the schools on their extensive use of data aligned with the school district's purpose, mission, and vision. Consider improving strategies to articulate to instructional staff the evaluation process and the impact of data on teaching and learning.

**The district provides opportunities for all staff to engage in meaningful dialogue and professional development.**

Collaborative planning and decision-making are data-driven. The system engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable student learning and professional practice improvements. The team heard from the superintendent and his cabinet about the district's strategy for a systemic continuous improvement process that begins in the spring as schools review the summative data of the current year's School Performance Plan. Instructional technology staff prepares spreadsheets of performance data for school staff. The team heard from stakeholders that the process continues through the summer and is finally facilitated in the fall after district and school personnel meet, including district instructional staff. The approval of the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction gives the final approval. A comparison of several years' performance is reviewed by instructional staff. Three-year data displays are reviewed annually for trends in student performance. Evidence provided includes district data spreadsheets, a sample of a middle school discussion of data, and SAC meeting minutes. Positive trends and improvement are analyzed for continued student improvement. I-Ready data are reviewed by teachers and used to inform decisions in the classroom. These data are communicated to all parents. Teachers reported to the team that they met in departments or grade levels to share the student data and determine the goals for the following year. Each stakeholder group interviewed by the couple spoke of the school district's forward-thinking nature. To reinforce the collaboration process within the district, the superintendent placed a section on collaboration into the teachers' contract, requiring collaboration as a new expectation and facilitating a formalized process to promote student improvement.

The school district plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the system's effectiveness. Professional learning is provided for all stakeholders in the district. Specific needs for internal stakeholders are addressed and facilitated by the district. The non-certified staff attends job-embedded skill-building professional development. Before certified staff attend a professional learning opportunity, it should be a result of needs assessment data, student instructional needs data, certification and endorsement needs, or aligned with local, state, and national mandates. The team heard from teachers and read in the district's performance standards that the district has maintained a duty-release delivery of professional development activities. This type of professional development allows staff to collaborate with colleagues and participate in professional learning activities aligned to instructional needs and delivered by content specialists and instructional coaches at the school or district office. With the advent of the pandemic, staff has also had opportunities to zoom in with other staff for professional development. Evidence provided by the district to support professional learning is the Middle School Professional Development Manual, the Canvas System, the district learning catalog, and i-Ready data.

The district's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness. The team heard from each teacher interview that the school performance plan engages teachers in collaboration and focuses on student improvement and instructional delivery with fellow staff. Alignment of the district and the school's instructional coaches, special education, and support staff provide growth opportunities and learner performance advancement. Utilizing the varied departments to improve instruction and learning is vital to the organizational purpose and mission. Content delivery has been somewhat altered because of the pandemic but remains the district's data-driven instruction center. As part of each school's School Performance Plan cycle, schools divide educators into data teams who participate in ongoing meetings whose focus is to review student data related to SPP goals. Evidence provided was Title I teacher remediation meetings agendas and agendas from the i-Ready Middle School pre-planning SPP meeting.

The school district provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs to ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve performance and organizational effectiveness. The team

heard staff regarding the process to mentor newly hired teachers using the Florida Clinical Educator Model. Feedback is essential to the process and provides the new teacher with multiple opportunities to observe, collaborate, and improve professional practice. Evidence-based observations, specific walk-through “look for” forms, and mentor activities were provided to the team, giving examples of efforts to assist the new teacher. The mentor is the support of the new teacher. The mentor supports the new teacher and discusses progress about his mentee to the group of mentors in the district. Data-driven instructional routines are discussed with the new teacher to work within their departments and share information to drive student improvement. The school administrator shares classroom observations with the mentor so that the mentor teacher can assist with specific approaches to instruction. During the summer, mentors work together to plan instructional activities for the mentees. Included in the process are consulting teachers who work collaboratively to create high-quality, virtual, or face-to-face professional learning offerings that continue to support and strengthen new teachers' instructional practices. District staff supervise coaches and conduct check-ins with their coaches. Everyone is accountable for the process to ensure the impact on teacher performance. Evidence provided to the team includes newcomers' ethics awareness training, the New Teacher Induction Manual, and mentor activities.

The team suggests that the collaborative process be enhanced by using deliberate professional learning communities (PLCs) at all levels within the district. District use of PLCs across grades levels, content, and schools could further bring people together in what has already been described as a collaborative, family environment. In addition, a focus on social/emotional learning could be enhanced through PLCs. Finally, using the four critical questions from the PLC process (what do we want students to know and be able to do, how will we know if they have learned it, how will we respond when some students do not learn, and how will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient) could improve intention, planning, and delivery to meet the differing needs of students. PLCs could also be used at the district office or delivered via Zoom.

**The school district has not fully embedded a learning culture for students that provides shared leadership, creativity, and collaboration opportunities.** The system provides limited experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness for students. Interviews with students elicited few student leadership opportunities to make objective decisions concerning their learning or school operations. Opportunities were limited to clubs and athletics. When interviewing the district senior leadership team, the leadership opportunities for teachers and administrators were abundant; however, no opportunities for students were shared with the team. Several stakeholder groups shared information about a leadership class at one of the high schools. Still, the function of the class was only tied to community service projects rather than actual opportunities to inform practice at the school. Teachers, parents, the School Advisory Council (SAC) members, community partners, and administrators indicated they were included in creating the School Performance Plan (SPP); however, student input was not mentioned in any of the stakeholder groups, nor did any of the students indicate they were included in the process. The information provided by the district in the performance standards does not reference the inclusion of student stakeholders in any of the shared leadership opportunities listed.

The learning culture provides limited experiences for creativity, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving. Many of the student responses to interview questions were clustered on compliance. For example, most students indicated they focused on getting good grades (compliance) than learning from their classmates (commitment). Similarly, student responses to how they respond when teachers talk to them about their work favored, “I listen and then do what I am told to do” (compliance) over “It makes me care more about doing my best” (commitment). When asked about their classroom activities, students shared a plethora of online learning platforms, such as i-Ready, Study Island, and IXL. These programs are designed to increase student achievement but not encourage creativity or innovation. Students did

share that they are sometimes offered more creative and innovative classroom projects at the end of the school year, “after we have taken the [state assessments].” When parents were asked how they knew their child was learning, the responses centered around i-Ready scores, letter grades, and state assessment scores rather than examples of quality work products. In the performance standards, the district references various practices employed by teachers to encourage collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking skills, including Socratic seminars, novel studies with culminating projects, lab activities, STEM-based projects, and ITV productions. Of these practices, only STEM-based projects through robotics/coding were referenced in interviews with teachers, parents, and students. Students appear to have little choice in directing their learning when considering student-directed learning. For example, one student group indicated when they finished their classwork on Thursdays, “we get to pick out our math worksheets.” Another group shared they can sometimes select what they write about in English/language arts class. A secondary student shared that he asked his social studies teacher to study black history. The teacher responded by providing a day of instruction in African American history.

Considering student collaboration, comments from students indicated that opportunities for collaboration were the exception and reserved for specific classes or occasions. For example, one student indicated, “We got to do science experiments last year.” However, the district’s performance standards indicate that labs should be occurring throughout the year. When asked about collaboration tools, such as Microsoft Teams or Google Docs, to share work between students, none had a recent experience with the practice. Only one of the teachers indicated they used tech collaboration tools, even though the district has invested in one-to-one computers for the elementary grade levels and is moving in the same direction for secondary students. Student service opportunities are a particular strength in this area. Students indicated a sense of pride in serving other students in their schools and the community. The Buddy Program allows students to assist, support, and mentor their classmates with disabilities. The Buddy Program received positive comments from various stakeholder groups, including teachers, parents, and students. Parents shared that participation in this program profoundly affected both the general education student and the student with disabilities.

The team suggests incorporating its Learning Walk Look Fors and Listen Fors as an opportunity to examine the student work products for elements of collaboration, student-directed learning, problem-solving, and creativity.

In summary, the team commends the Okaloosa County School District for its hospitality during the Engagement Review. Appreciated throughout the review was the ongoing and forward-thinking adherence to Cognia Standards by the district that reflects the quality and continued improvement. The district continues to adhere to a strong commitment of purpose, vision, and mission, designed to support learner engagement and academic, military, and career attainment. As described by the superintendent, “Everyone is important.” Stakeholders’ positive and supportive comments regarding the district included family, collaborative, community, proud, forward-thinking, and resilient. The team saw stakeholder feedback, collaboration, and data-driven efforts throughout the review.

## 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 (Lead Evaluator Only)
<b>Janet Haas, Lead Evaluator</b>	Dr. Janet Haas has participated with Cognia Accreditation since 1990, a school educator, State Council member and chair, Lead and Associate Lead Evaluator, and team member on review teams in Michigan and other states, including serving on a team with the Department of Defense review. While working in the public schools, she was a mathematics teacher, special education teacher consultant, and marketing teacher. Dr. Haas was also a department chair, assistant principal, principal, and director in career technical education (CTE). Dr. Haas has been an adjunct professor at Wayne State University in the College of Education/Masters of Teacher Education. She earned degrees at Michigan State, Eastern Michigan, Wayne State Universities, and an endorsement at Madonna University. Ms. Haas has presented at local, state, and national conferences in the areas of CTE, integration of academics, and teacher education. Since retiring in 2014, she has been a program director for Brighton Shared Services, working with Oakland County parochial/private schools. She received Michigan's Cognia Excellence in Education Award.
<b>Sylvia Jackson, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Gadsden County School District, Florida</b>	
<b>Dana Kriznar, Deputy Superintendent, Duval County Public Schools, Florida</b>	
<b>Paula Steele, Director of Leadership Development, St. Johns County School District, Florida</b>	

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