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**MONTGOMERY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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MPS AdvancED Accreditation Review Shows Progress

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA – Montgomery Public Schools received the results Friday of the ongoing review of work being done in the system to retain the district’s accreditation and continue to move forward. The results of the review by AdvancED were extremely positive.

Performance on nine specific standards (eight earlier classified in the “red” or needing improvement, and one in “yellow” or emerging) improved significantly. Two of the standards moved from “red” to “green” (meets expectations) one from “yellow” to “green” and six from “red” to “yellow”.

MPS Superintendent Ann Roy Moore was excited to see the district staff’s hard work paying off.

“We love green,” said Moore. “The movement is impressive. This is the result of countless hours of work and a true focus on students. Even more exciting, is the change in the morale and attitude of our teachers, staff, administrators, our parents and the community. I am greeted in the grocery store with smiles, thumbs up and words of encouragement to continue moving forward. Our local leaders from the city and county are supporting us. And I can’t tell you how much the support from State Superintendent Erick Mackey and his staff has helped us. We are now focused on the next steps that will continue to move the colors to green, and I expect to see the blue of ‘exceeds expectations’ in our next report.”

The team effort of the MPS Board, Central Office and school based staff will continue. The AdvancED monitoring team’s recommendations will be the district’s road map to continued success.

Each area of work (standard) has specific tasks.

The Governing Authority Establishes and Ensures Adherence to Policies that are Designed to Support System Effectiveness.

This area moved from “needs improvement” to “emerging”. One of the primary items cited by the most recent review team was the need to complete an updated district policy manual. That work is in progress with the final version expected to be in place before the AdvancED team returns in June. The staff will continue to work with the State Department of Education and the district’s legal advisers to insure the policies comply with all laws and supports the system’s goals.

The Governing Authority Adheres to a Code of Ethics and Functions within Defined Roles and Responsibilities.

The MPS Board has participated in a variety of trainings and a self-evaluation to promote positive outcomes including working more closely together, defining roles and strengthening relationships. Because of these efforts and others, this standard improved to “emerging”. The recent review encourages the board to continue to participate in professional development, adopt a code of ethics, and to continue to evaluate their performance. Board members are eager to continue this work and expect to see more improvement in the next review.

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Leaders Engage Stakeholders to Support the Achievement of the System’s Purpose and Direction.

This standard also saw improvement. Work on expanding communication between the system and internal and external publics is ongoing. The district tracks a number of measurements that show that the system’s stories are being told – and there is always room for improvement. One of the key elements cited by the review team is the lack of a current accurate organizational chart. The superintendent and staff have a draft of a chart that is expected to be approved in advance of the return of the review team. Additional reviews and revisions of board policy concerning communication elements are also underway. Continued improvement is expected.

Learners have Equitable Opportunities to Develop Skills and Achieve the Content and Learning Priorities Established by the System.

This area also showed marked improvement earning an “emerging” score. Enhanced professional development for principals and teachers will continue to help the learning leaders in each school provide the best possible opportunities for students. Advances in gathering and analyzing student performance data will continue. Efforts to design a comprehensive assessment system that will help to adjust the delivery of instruction will continue as this area of work improves.

The System Implements a Process to Ensure the Curriculum is Clearly Aligned to Standards and Best Practices.

The AdvancED report says, “The system made progress in the curriculum and instruction areas in multiple ways ... MPS enhanced a multi-dimensional protocol to evaluate curricular resources.” The report praised this “emerging” area of the district while pointing out the need to involve teachers in more of the process. This will be an important part of the district’s effort to continue to improve in this area.

MPS chief academic officer sees a bright future for academic achievement.

“There is a lot to be done, but we are consistently working to determine our next steps”, said Bernard Mitchell. “The staff and I are conducting our mid-year reviews. Waiting until the end of the year to adjust instruction to improve student achievement is not acceptable. We are working to guide our instructional leaders so they can help improve teaching practices in the classroom.”

Instruction is Monitored and Adjusted to Meet Individual Learner’s Needs and the System’s Learning Expectations.

This element of the review moved from “emerging” to “meets expectations”. While the effort that moved this area into the “green” is being celebrated, the system acknowledges that additional work is needed. Some of the areas that will receive focus in the coming months were outlined in the review document. These included working to ensure that instructional expectations are clearly communicated to teachers and school level administrators as the district centers on monitoring outcomes.

The System Demonstrates Strategic Resource Management that Include Long-Range Planning and Use of Resources in Support of the System’s Purpose and Direction.

The AdvancED team was very complimentary of the efforts of the district in managing resources. The score moved from a “red” to a “green” showing the system had met expectations.

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.

The AdvancED report cited the hiring of MPS Chief Financial Officer Arthur Watts, along with assistance from staff in the Alabama Department of Education, as facilitating real improvement in the system's fiscal standing.

"We were faced with some serious financial barriers," said Watts. "We have moved from the threat of funds being withheld to having a balanced budget with a reserve that exceeds state requirements. The district is now at a point where we are re-focusing our efforts on keeping resources in the classroom. There are hard choices that still have to be made to ensure we continue to move forward. This superintendent and board are dedicated to making every dollar work for every student."

The district's budget process has been refined with student achievement as the target of every effort. The report praised the progress of the system and suggested continued involvement of the new staff and board members in the fiscal process. The AdvancED team also suggested continued efforts to reduce locally funded units and increase revenue for the system.

"We are proud of our progress," said MPS Chief Administrative Officer Terry Roller. "We have come together as a family and faced our challenges in a way that few people believed possible. Just a few short months ago, it was suggested there was no possibility we could overcome the barriers blocking our progress. In spite of those predictions, we found ways around, over and through the blockade and are continuing to move forward. I am confident in our team and their abilities. We are going to succeed. Every child is important, and they deserve our best ... and that is what we are going to give them."

The AdvancED report continues the MPS District *Accreditation, Under Review* status. The team will return in June to continue the system's review.