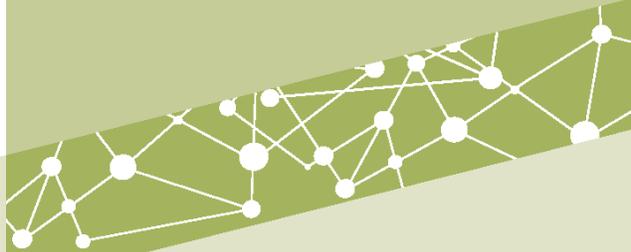


April 28-30, 2019



AdvancED® Engagement Review Report



AdvancED® Performance Accreditation

» **Results for:**
EdOptions Academy
5600 West 83rd Street
Suite 300, 8200 Tower
Bloomington, MN 55437

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AdvancED Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

Accreditation is pivotal to leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research-based standards, the 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 AdvancED 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 AdvancED Performance Standards. Using these Standards, Engagement Review Teams assess the quality of learning environments to gain valuable insights and target improvements in teaching and learning. AdvancED 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.

AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results

The AdvancED Performance Standards Diagnostic is used by the Engagement Review Team to evaluate the institution’s effectiveness based on AdvancED’s Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of the three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity** and **Resource Capacity**. Results are reported within four ranges identified by the colors. The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

| Color | Rating | Description |
|--------|----------------------|--|
| Red | Needs Improvement | Identifies key areas that need more focused improvement efforts |
| Yellow | Emerging | Represents areas to enhance and extend current improvement efforts |
| Green | Meets Expectations | Pinpoints quality practices that meet the Standards |
| Blue | Exceeds Expectations | Demonstrates noteworthy practices producing clear results that exceed expectations |

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 institution commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners. | Meets Expectations |
| 1.2 | Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the institution's purpose and desired outcomes for learning. | Meets Expectations |
| 1.3 | The institution engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice. | Meets Expectations |
| 1.4 | The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support institutional effectiveness. | Exceeds Expectations |
| 1.5 | The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities. | Meets Expectations |
| 1.6 | Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness. | Exceeds Expectations |
| 1.7 | Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning. | Meets Expectations |
| 1.8 | Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the institution's purpose and direction. | Meets Expectations |
| 1.9 | The institution provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |
| 1.10 | Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement. | Meets Expectations |
| 1.11 | Leaders utilize ethical marketing and communication practices. | Exceeds Expectations |

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 institution. | Exceeds Expectations |
| 2.2 | The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving. | Emerging |
| 2.3 | The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs and skills needed for success. | Exceeds Expectations |
| 2.4 | The institution has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers that support their educational experiences. | Meets Expectations |
| 2.5 | Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels. | Meets Expectations |

| Learning Capacity Standards | | Rating |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 2.6 | The institution implements a process to ensure the curriculum is clearly aligned to standards and best practices. | Emerging |
| 2.7 | Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations. | Exceeds Expectations |
| 2.8 | The institution provides programs and services for learners' educational future and career planning. | Needs Improvement |
| 2.9 | The institution implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners. | Meets Expectations |
| 2.10 | Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated. | Meets Expectations |
| 2.11 | Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning. | Meets Expectations |
| 2.12 | The institution implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning. | Meets Expectations |
| 2.13 | The institution ensures authenticity in student learning in a digital learning environment. | Meets Expectations |

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 institution plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the institution's effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |
| 3.2 | The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |
| 3.3 | The institution provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |
| 3.4 | The institution attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the institution's purpose and direction. | Meets Expectations |
| 3.5 | The institution integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |
| 3.6 | The institution provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the institution. | Meets Expectations |
| 3.7 | The institution demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the institution's purpose and direction. | Meets Expectations |
| 3.8 | The institution allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the institution's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |

| Resource Capacity Standards | | Rating |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 3.9 | The institution provides an effective Learning Management System. | Exceeds Expectations |
| 3.10 | The institution’s technology infrastructure supports teaching, learning and operational effectiveness. | Meets Expectations |

Assurances

Assurances are statements 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 | | |

AdvancED Continuous Improvement System

AdvancED 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 AdvancED 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. AdvancED 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 will be organized by the Levels of Impact within i3: Initiate, Improve and Impact. The organization of the findings is based upon the ratings from the Standards Diagnostic and the i3 Levels of 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 stakeholders are engaged in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. Implementation is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are monitored and adjusted for quality and fidelity of implementation. Standards identified within Initiate should become the focus of the institution’s continuous improvement journey to move toward the collection, analysis and use of data to measure the results of engagement and implementation. A focus on enhancing the capacity of the institution in meeting the identified 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

represents 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 (minimum of three years). Standards identified within Improve are those in which the institution is using results to inform their continuous improvement processes and using results over time to demonstrate 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 the culture of the institution. Institutions should continue to support and sustain these practices that are yielding results in improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Findings

The findings in this report represent the degree to which the Accreditation Standards are effectively implemented in support of the learning environment and the mission of the institution. Standards which are identified in the **Initiate** phase of practice are considered Priorities for Improvement that must be addressed by the institution to retain accreditation. Standards which are identified in the **Improve** phase of practice are considered Opportunities for Improvement that the institution should consider. Standards which are identified in the **Impact** phase of practice are considered Effective Practices within the institution.

| I3 Rubric Levels | STANDARDS |
|---|---|
| Initiate Priorities for Improvement | Standard: 2.8 |
| Improve Opportunities for Improvement | Standards: 2.2, 2.6 |
| Impact Effective Practices | Standards: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11 Standards: 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13 Standards: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10 |

Accreditation Status and Index of Education Quality (IEQ)

AdvancED 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. AdvancED provides the Index of Education Quality (IEQ) as a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus. The IEQ is comprised of the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: 1) Leadership Capacity; 2) Learning Capacity; and 3) Resource Capacity. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provides 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 the Initiate 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 AIN institutions evaluated for accreditation in the last five years. The range of the annual AIN IEQ average is presented to enable you to benchmark your results with other institutions in the network.

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Institution IEQ | 339.56 | AIN 5 Year IEQ Range | 278.34 – 283.33 |
|------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|

Insights from the Review

The Engagement Review Team engaged in professional discussions and deliberations about the processes, programs and practices within the institution to arrive at the findings of the team. These findings are organized around themes guided by the evidence, examples of programs and practices and provide direction for the institution’s continuous improvement efforts. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide contextualized information from the team deliberations and provide information about the team’s analysis of the practices, processes, and programs of the institution from the levels of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide next steps to guide the improvement journey of the institution in its efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Accreditation Engagement Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on its current improvement efforts and to adapt and adjust their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

The Engagement Review Team identified a number of themes reflective of the EdOptions Academy’s continuous improvement process. These included many strengths and opportunities that offer perspective and guidance as the process proceeds. The team conducted interviews of key stakeholders, observed instructional practices and reviewed numerous artifacts that substantiate the evidence cited in support of the identified themes.

The team learned that the Academy is a student-centered organization focused on the development of all students, “without regard for zip codes or past experiences,” as the director noted in the Improvement Journey presentation. This was emphasized by a governing authority member’s statement, “Students are at the center of every decision.” The team noted that organizational practices and procedures have been intentionally implemented with the learner in mind. The team reviewed online handbooks for teachers and students and found them to be user friendly, while clearly spelling out expectations and needed information. Standard operating procedures videos were found to be well-done and effective, as discussed in interviews with leadership and staff. Through the staff demonstration of the Maestro learning management system (LMS), the team was able to get an excellent overview of its comprehensiveness and effectiveness, both from a learner and a staff perspective. The governing authority and leadership, in their interviews, clearly corroborated that the delivery of quality instruction is why they exist. In reviewing hiring practices, as well as the extensive onboarding, mentoring and coaching programs that are available for all employees, it was clear to the team that instructional quality is number one. Much of the organization’s professional development is housed on the Maestro LMS and easily accessible for staff.

Through interviews with leadership and staff and the review of human resources documents, it was learned that effective supervision and evaluation include regular evaluations, virtual walk-throughs and weekly staff feedback meetings. In their interviews, parents and students confirmed that communications are provided on a regular basis and are easy to understand.

During a student interview, it was stated, “They tell you; they show you; they keep you accountable.” This statement clearly states the EdOptions mantra to meet individual student needs. Interviews with teachers corroborated that this may mean adjusting course work, as it may best meet abilities and learning styles. A staff member reinforced this with, “If you work at the academy, you put the student at the center of every decision we make.” In the Improvement Journey presentation, it was learned the organization serves over 50,000 learners who come with diverse circumstances. Some are fulltime students in the academy; for others it may be credit recovery, home-schooled, medically fragile, athletes or sex trafficking victims. Each brings special needs that the organization attempts to address with high quality curriculum and instruction. The team found that a major challenge to meet individual needs is that a home school often holds all the data that could be helpful in assessments. Although the team found examples of how attempts at partnering are made, some of those institutions with critical information do not share, in which case, EdOptions works to do its best with available data. There is no formal requirement for sharing of data among entities with which a particular student may be engaged. Leadership shared its frustration, especially as learners bring greater socio-emotional needs. Both leadership and the governing authority indicated they have committed to striving to better serve such learners through curriculum modifications, as well as the provision of additional support services. In addition, as appropriate, the organization has implemented Zoom sessions in which students and teachers can interact in real time. The team learned that a pilot program is being conducted in which teachers are available to chat and screen share at any time in English language arts. In addition, the academy is moving from being primarily asynchronous to a more synchronous design. These modifications have been made in response to feedback from students and parents to staff and are overseen by the instructional leaders. The team determined the organization as being dynamic in responding to input from multiple stakeholders to continuous improvement strategies focused on student success.

The team learned that EdOptions has an extensive array of curricula to offer, which is provided by Edmentum, an affiliated organization. While those curricula are comprehensive and address the standards of all states in which the academy operates, the team found minimal evidence indicating a learning culture that provides opportunities for students to develop creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving skills. It was noted in interviews with students, parents and staff that students complete end-of-course surveys; however, the team was unable to establish how those data are analyzed and applied to adjust courses of study. It is recognized that opportunities for the expression of creativity and practice of collaborative problem-solving are unique challenges in the digital learning world. However, 21st century learners need to develop and practice these skills. Interviews with instructional leaders and teachers indicated that during their weekly meetings, a need exists to capture best practices that have shown promise. The team was impressed with the example of English language arts teachers working together to establish chat rooms to provide a forum for collaboration, in addition to a place to seek guidance for the completion of assignments. While this may not be officially a pilot, the team encourages the leadership to analyze this practice and bring to scale, where practical.

Although the organization strives to meet the educational needs of all students, the team determined there is a need to address guidance strategies for students to plan for their college and career preparation. This was found through evidence gathering from a variety of sources. While some opportunities for students to study in the areas of career and technical education (CTE) exist through elective courses, the team was unable to identify services to

support the development of postsecondary planning for all students. It was noted that one of the instructional leaders has been designated to provide guidance and direction to CTE education programs; however, the mandates in all states for every student to be college and career ready upon high school graduation go beyond that. In their climate survey, 67 percent of teachers stated they believe that the institution provides supports to students, including college and career counseling. The team was unable to identify a formal process for promoting college and career readiness as part of standard practice. In their interviews, leaders agreed that this is an area of need that requires focused attention, while pointing to the fact that this is another instance in which it is difficult to provide such assurances for all participants, as most are not fulltime students of the academy.

The EdOptions Academy is to be commended for the many excellent programs and practices that are occurring for learners, their families and staff. The team wishes the center the best as it proceeds on its journey of continuous improvement. It is expected that these insights provide some guidance as the center considers next steps on that journey. As it does so, it will further move toward its vision of “Empowering futures, one student at a time!”

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 Priorities 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 professional experiences. All Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members complete AdvancED training and elect certification to provide knowledge and understanding of the AdvancED tools and processes. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

| Team Member Name | Brief Biography |
|---|--|
| <p>John Sedey Lead Evaluator</p> | <p>John Sedey has been a teacher, school and district administrator, and educational consultant. Since retiring from public school administration, he has been in private practice, primarily consulting to an intermediate school district, a community college, three alternative schools and four charter schools. He is the executive director of an education non-profit corporation. John has provided leadership to career and technical education, guidance and social services, assessment and testing, student data systems, alternative education, state and federal program administration, education-business partnerships, and environmental education. He has been a senior developer for one of the eleven New American Schools Development grants. In his advocacy for college and career readiness, he has consulted to federal and state departments of education. John holds a bachelor’s degree in history and business, a master’s degree in education administration, and has done additional graduate work, including that as a Bush Public School Executive Fellow. He has led more than a hundred AdvancED reviews in 29 states in the past ten years.</p> |
| <p>Melissa Kaczmarek</p> | <p>Melissa Kaczmarek is an area director for AdvancED/Measured Progress in engagement services. In this position, she supports institutions on their continuous improvement journeys, staffs Engagement Review Teams, conducts Readiness and Engagement Reviews, and reviews reports. Before joining AdvancED, her previous roles included serving as an elementary and middle school teacher, literacy specialist as well as adjunct and full-time faculty in literacy education courses for undergraduate and graduate students. Melissa also served as a staff development specialist for a charter school authorizer. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Central Michigan University and her Master of Arts in literacy education degree from Saginaw Valley State University.</p> |

| Team Member Name | Brief Biography |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <p>George Lee</p> | <p>George Lee is a visionary leader and educator with more than 29 years of experience in analogical and pedagogical practices. He is a successful problem solver, curriculum writer, school leader, and strategic planner for school improvement projects at both school and district levels. George is the chief executive officer for Booming Learning Center (BLC), a for-profit, full-service academic support company for students in K-12 and education professionals. BLC provides professional development and instructional support for students and teachers. At BLC, he oversees financial reporting and service implementation with partner agencies, school districts and state agencies for learning outcomes and program objectives. George holds a Bachelor of Science in adult education and curriculum development from Southern Illinois University of Carbondale, a master’s degree in instructional leadership and organizational development from Jacksonville University, and master’s in business administration (MBA) from the University of Florida. An advocate for learning, George’s goal is to establish and develop learning centers in metropolitan communities in the state of Florida to enhance problem solving and critical thinking skills for underserve students in urban areas.</p> |
| <p>Dr. Kristine Simons</p> | <p>Kristine Simons retired after more than 40 years in education in three states. Her career included positions as a substitute teacher, a college administrator, a high school history teacher, a department head and district gifted and talented coordinator in Illinois. In Indiana, Simons worked as an administrator and adjunct faculty at Indiana University before returning to the public schools, where her career spanned 16 years in the school corporations of Elkhart, Penn, Mishawaka and South Bend in northern Indiana. Her positions included assistant principal, principal, founding director of an alternative high school and central office director. In Michigan, Simons served as a principal for rural and urban schools, as well as new tech director and assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction in Benton Harbor. Her doctoral research focused on the principal as a change agent. For AdvancED, Simons has served as a team member and an Associate Lead Evaluator for schools, digital learning institutions and systems, and as a Lead Evaluator for school reviews.</p> |
| <p>Verlen Tank</p> | <p>Virlen Tank has taught 19 years in special education and is in her third year of teaching in a digital setting at Minnesota Online High School. Ms. Tank completed her undergraduate K-12 special education degree at Moorhead State University, with licensure in mild to moderate mental impairment (MMMI). She earned her master’s degree in special education with licensure in emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD) and learning disabilities (LD) from Bethel University and added licensure in autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Ms. Tank is a member of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools re-licensure committee and has served on the state grant review board.</p> |

| Team Member Name | Brief Biography |
|-------------------------|--|
| Dr. Tina Woolsey | Dr. Tina Woolsey has been a member of the AdvancED team since 2013. She works with school leaders, lead evaluators, and team members as they participate in the AdvancED Engagement Review process. Dr. Woolsey served the students of Missouri's public schools for over 22 years as a classroom teacher, building principal, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction and superintendent of schools. Tina received a doctorate degree in education from Saint Louis University. She also holds a specialist degree and master's degree in education administration from Missouri State University. |

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About AdvancED

AdvancED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization serving the largest community of education professionals in the world. Founded on more than 100 years of work in continuous improvement, AdvancED combines the knowledge and expertise of a research institute, the skills of a management consulting firm and the passion of a grassroots movement for educational change to empower Pre-K-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.

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