



Q&A

What does it mean to be placed on Accredited Probation?

A school/district is placed on Accredited Probation when the Required Actions are deemed to seriously detract from the school/district's educational program, limit the school/district's ability to fulfill its mission, and/or cause potential harm to students.

This status allows AdvancED/SACS CASI to fully assist the school system to address the remaining work needed to reach operational status on the unresolved issues and insure that it authentically commits to a well-defined strategy of continuous school improvement.

What must Atlanta Public Schools do now to retain accreditation?

The institution is accountable for addressing the required actions as follows and host a Monitoring Team visit by September 30, 2011.

1. Develop and implement a long term plan to communicate with and engage stakeholders in the work of the district to achieve the Board's mission for educating the students of Atlanta Public Schools (APS). The plan should focus on efforts that will regain stakeholders' trust and confidence in the governance and leadership of Atlanta Public Schools.
2. Secure and actively use the services of a trained, impartial professional mediator who will work with the Board members to resolve communication, operational and personal issues impeding the effectiveness of the governing body.
3. Ensure that the actions and behavior of all board members are aligned with board policies, especially those related to ethics and chain of command, and AdvancED/SACS CASI Accreditation Standards and policies.
4. Review and refine policies to promote the processes that are needed to achieve the Board's Mission in the education of the Atlanta Public School students. The board members shall provide evidence that they have refocused all of their energies on improving the teaching and learning processes for all their students.
5. Develop and implement a process for selecting a superintendent that is transparent during all phases, engages public participation, and demonstrates integrity throughout the process. It is strongly suggested that the final selection of the superintendent should be determined by more than a simple majority vote of approval by the Board.
6. Work directly with the State of Georgia to address the inconsistencies in the Atlanta Independent School System Charter so as to ensure alignment with system policies and governing Board actions.

Depending on the level of progress in meeting the six required actions identified above, recommendations regarding the continuing accreditation status of the schools within Atlanta Public Schools may be modified after its visit in September. In preparation for the Monitoring Visit, the district must submit two *Institution Progress Reports* to AdvancED/SACS CASI—the first by May 1, 2011 and the second two weeks prior to the Monitoring Visit. Atlanta Public Schools must document all actions taken to address the required actions contained herein. Included with each progress report must be artifacts specifically describing and documenting what has been accomplished as required.

How should Atlanta Public Schools be progressing in its search for a superintendent?

The school system can best respond to the current progress in their search for a superintendent. Selecting a superintendent with the right experience to move Atlanta Public Schools forward will take time and may be a challenge. The board must come together in a collaborative process as it seeks to replace Dr. Hall. It is the recommendation of AdvancED/SACS CASI that the next superintendent be selected with more than simply a majority vote.

Has the educational program at Atlanta Public School's high schools been affected by the governance struggles of the board?

Leadership provides the vision and direction for others to follow. When leadership is ineffective, individuals in schools are not provided the support and guidance necessary for continued effectiveness. The concern among staff is great and the long term effect of poor leadership will be detrimental to the educational program in Atlanta Public Schools.

What was the role of the Special Review Team?

The purpose of the Special Review Team, which visited Atlanta Public Schools December 9-10, was to:

1. Determine if the school system continues to meet the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and policies.
2. Conduct an in-depth investigation of eligible and relevant complaints related to accreditation.
3. Provide required actions, where and if appropriate, focused on areas/issues that need attention and action.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation to the national AdvancED Georgia Council.

Can you tell us about the members of the Special Review Team?

The Special Review Team was comprised of highly skilled and experienced professional educators trained to conduct reviews of this nature. The members of the team came from Georgia and other states in the South. The team members reflect the demographics of the school district and have extensive experience in school districts that are similar to Atlanta Public Schools.

What do you recommend to parents with students in Atlanta Public Schools?

Parents should continue to be involved and have their voices heard on issues of importance to the quality of education in Atlanta Public Schools.

Will you continue to be involved with the district and in what ways?

The status of probation allows us to fully engage the system in the accreditation and school improvement process. The school system must host a Monitoring Visit by September 30, 2011. The AdvancED Georgia office will be available to assist with any of the required actions in preparation for this visit.

What are the requirements of accreditation?

In order to earn and/or maintain AdvancED/SACS CASI accreditation, a school or school district must: 1) meet the Accreditation Standards, policies, and procedures of AdvancED; 2) host a quality assurance review team at least once every five years; and 3) engage in continuous improvement; and 4) demonstrate quality assurance. A more detailed description of all requirements can be found in our Accreditation Policies and Procedures at www.advanc-ed.org.

Can you explain AdvancED?

AdvancED is the parent organization of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) and the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI). AdvancED serves and engages more than 27,000 schools in 69 countries serving 16 million students.