Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
Savannah Arts Academy
500 Washington Avenue
Savannah, Georgia, United States 31405

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North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.
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About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

Background. Founded in 1895, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) accredit public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, Latin America, and the Department of Defense Schools worldwide.

In April 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form one strong unified organization dedicated to education quality. That unified organization, known as AdvancED, creates the world’s largest education community, representing 27,000 public and private schools and districts across the United States and in 65 countries worldwide and educating 15 million students.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI and SACS CASI have defined shared, research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help schools continuously improve.

The Accreditation Process. To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, schools must:

1) Meet the AdvancED Standards and Policies for Quality Schools. Schools demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED standards and policies which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

2) Engage in continuous improvement. Schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose the school is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).

3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review. Schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, schools host an external Quality Assurance Review Team once every five years. The team evaluates the school’s adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school’s improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the school improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school and a written report detailing the team’s required actions. The school acts on the team’s required actions and submits a progress report following the review.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI accreditation engages the entire school community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help schools be the best they can be on behalf of the students they serve.
Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

**Purpose.** The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

1. Evaluate the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards and policies.
2. Assess the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions to improve the school.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation for review by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

A key aim of the Quality Assurance Review is to verify that the school is operating with institutional integrity - that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students.

**School Preparation.** To prepare for the Quality Assurance Review, the school community engages in an in-depth self assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. The school identifies and describes the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each standard. Through this internal review, the school examines how its systems and processes contribute to student performance and school effectiveness.

**Summary of Team Activities.** The Quality Assurance Review Team is led by an AdvancED certified team chair and comprised of professionals from outside the school. The team reviews the findings of the school's internal self-assessment, conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders, reviews student performance data and other documentation provided by the school, and observes practices and daily operations. The team engages in professional deliberations to reach consensus on the school's adherence to the standards for accreditation. The team provides an oral exit report and prepares a written Quality Assurance Review Team Report designed to help the school improve.

**The Quality Assurance Review Team Report.** Following the visit, the review team completes the Quality Assurance Review report. After review by a nationally-trained reader, the report is submitted to the school. The report contains commendations and required actions for improvement.

**Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions.** The school uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The NCA CASI/SACS CASI State Office is available to assist schools in addressing the required actions. At prescribed intervals, the school must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress the school has made on the team's required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school is addressing the required actions.

**Accreditation Recommendation.** The Quality Assurance Review Team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school following action from the commission.
Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the SACS CASI Georgia State Office (SACS-CASI-GA), a division of AdvancED, visited the Savannah Arts Academy in Savannah, Georgia, United States on 03/06/2012 - 03/07/2012.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 2 members of the administrative team, 32 students, 12 parents, and 20 teachers. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the school. Specifically, the team examined the school's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED standards focus on systems within a school and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of the standards lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards. The Quality Assurance Review Team used the AdvancED standards to guide its review of the school, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics of a quality school.

Through its examination of the school's adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following commendations and required actions.

Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the school for the following strengths and accomplishments. While additional strengths are noted in the detailed review of each standard that appears later in this report, the commendations listed below are the strengths that the team believes are most deserving of being highlighted.

Commendation 1

Commendation Statement:
There is a strong commitment by the school administration and staff to provide a high quality well rounded educational experience for all students.

Evidence:
Stakeholder interviews provided the team with insight into the high level of appreciation and support for the efforts of the school staff and administration in providing students the skill sets required for post secondary success.
Rationale:
High level of satisfaction assists in driving continuous improvement in order to take schools and staff to levels that they may have not previously considered as an objective.

Commendation 2

Commendation Statement:
The school offers robust Advanced Placement course offerings.

Evidence:
Currently, 13 Advance Placement courses are offered at the school. Two additional courses are slated to be added to the offerings for the next school year to meet student needs and to provide for increased student rigor.

Rationale:
High level of satisfaction assists in driving continuous improvement in order to take schools and staff to levels that they may have not previously considered as an objective.

Commendation 3

Commendation Statement:
Students and parents have a high regard for teacher connectivity in supporting individual student success.

Evidence:
Stakeholder surveys and interviews confirmed an exceptionally high level of satisfaction for the support provided by teachers in order to ensure student success.

Rationale:
The connectivity of teachers to students supports continuous improvement and individual student success but also ensures that all stakeholders find the value in the work of teachers and the value of the school’s quest for excellence.

Commendation 4

Commendation Statement:
The school provides exceptional extensions of classroom learning provided by extracurricular opportunities.

Evidence:
A listing of events provided the team with insight into the large numbers of events scheduled that support student learning. The school stakeholders provided confirmation that the multitude of curricular and extracurricular activities are coordinated effectively and efficiently throughout the school year even in the severe economic downturn facing Georgia schools over the last number of years.

Rationale:
Extracurricular and curricular related activities provide an extension of classroom learning especially for the art-related programs.
Required Actions

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following required actions for improvement. The team focused its required actions on those areas that, if addressed, will have the greatest impact on improving student performance and overall school effectiveness. The school will be held accountable for addressing each of the required actions noted in this section. Following this review, the school will be asked to submit a progress report on these required actions.

Required Action 1

Required Action:
Develop a comprehensive technology plan which provides laser focus for targeted needs and supports the school’s continuous improvement plan.

Evidence:
The current technology plan is a district-level plan and does not provide specific guidance to the school on technology priorities.

Rationale:
School-level technology planning, regardless of district requirements, will allow the prioritization of needs in an austere financial environment and provide school administration focus on coordination with the district on building level next steps which best support the quest vision.

Required Action 2

Required Action:
Implement professional learning communities to develop and implement a systematic plan of next steps which best address moving high performance to exceptional performance.

Evidence:
Stakeholder’s views on school performance are not aligned with school leadership.

Rationale:
In order to move from high performance to exceptional performance, collegial discussions should be held to better determine what opportunities exist for continuous improvement that are not yet established. Professional learning communities provide an opportunity for these discussions.

Required Action 3

Required Action:
Develop a professional learning plan which addresses the unique needs of Savannah Arts Academy’s quest for exceptional performance.

Evidence:
Professional learning plans were either guided by district offerings or by school department wishes. A comprehensive professional learning plan for the school was not available.
Rationale:
A comprehensive school developed professional learning plan provides teachers and administration a prioritized view of those activities which have been determined are best aligned to the school’s continuous improvement plan. The prioritization will assist in alignment of funding priorities in support of those activities which move the quest to academic excellence forward.

Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools: The team reviewed the school’s adherence to each of the AdvancED standards. The findings from this review are provided in the next section of this report.

Next Steps

The school should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the commendations section to maximize their impact on the school.
3. Develop action plans to address the required actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the required actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school's efforts to improve student performance and school effectiveness.
5. Following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. Lack of progress can result in a change in accreditation status.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation
Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review Team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for state review and for action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and communicates it to the school. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school should celebrate its achievement with the school community. The SACS-CASI-GA accreditation seals are available at www.advanc-ed.org/communicatiionskit for accredited schools and districts to post on their website and to use in school communications. Flags, door decal, diploma seals, and lapel pins are also available and can be ordered from the website to help you share your accomplishment with your community.
Summary
The accreditation process engages the school in an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. The next steps in this journey are to build on the strengths and address the required actions noted in this report. Doing so will enable the school to advance in its quest for excellence and deepen the fulfillment of its mission for all students.
Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the Savannah Arts Academy demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

Standard 1: Vision and Purpose

**Standard:** The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.

**Description** - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

It is evident that the Savannah Arts Academy’s quest is the driving force that guides all stakeholders in the achievement of academic and academic excellence. Repeatedly, stakeholders communicated the Savannah Arts Academy’s quest for exceptional performance.

Throughout the school building, the shared vision and mission statements as prescribed by the school district were posted; however, it is the “Quest” of the Savannah Arts Academy to Develop Graduates who Exemplify Academic and Artistic Excellence that permeates throughout the school’s community. The school’s quest was reiterated in interviews with the school’s leadership, teachers, parents, students, and support staff. It was clear that the quest was the guiding influence on the faculty’s teaching and learning processes, students’ successes, and the parents’ support of the school.

Although evidence indicates that all stakeholders were committed to the school’s quest, there was little evidence indicating that it is reviewed and that the findings of a systematic review are communicated to stakeholders. There was also little evidence to document the identifying of goals to continually advance the vision and quest of the school.

The profile of the school and community provided adequate information about the student body demographics and the demographics of the community. The Quality Assurance Review team noted a racial disparity in the demographics of the school and the Savannah community.

**Strengths** - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The vision and mission statement as outlined by Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools are embraced by all faculty members and students. Savannah Arts Academy’s Quest, however, is a commonly shared guide for excellence that is shared by all stakeholders.
- Savannah Arts Academy’s Quest is the driving force that guides all stakeholders in the achievement of academic and artistic excellence.
- There is a strong commitment by the school administration and staff to provide a high quality well rounded educational experience for all students.

**Opportunities** - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:
• Incorporate into the school’s comprehensive plan for improvement a plan to review the school’s fulfillment of its “Quest” and its method of communication of fulfilling the quest and vision.
• Update the school’s annual report to the community to reflect current data and disseminate the report to the stakeholders through the PTSA and school council as well as the faculty and student stakeholders.

Finding: Savannah Arts Academy has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

Standard: The school provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and school effectiveness.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Savannah Arts Academy has established operational procedures and protocols which support the school’s quest for excellence. Appropriate procedural documents and policies were provided as artifacts that indicated the school administration provides guidance to support the efficient operation of the school.

The essential artifacts reviewed further supported that the school principal and assistant principal are viewed and supported as the executive, administrative and leadership of the school. This was further supported by interviews with student, teacher and parent stakeholders.

The team observed the use of data for improvement of instruction. School administration has developed a data room which provides ongoing review of school trends. Teachers were able to review with the team how data informs their instructional practices. This was particularly clear in the use of results from Advanced Placement data. Department meetings were key opportunities for teachers to come together in learning communities to discuss data, department-based improvement initiatives and to collaborate.

Stakeholders demonstrated strong support in their roles of supporting school governance by their respective avenues of participation. Parents are asked to volunteer for 10 hours per year and may participate in PTSA or various committees in which teachers may also engage.

The school leadership does an exemplary job of managing the myriad of curricular and extracurricular activities that help establish Savannah Arts Academy as a leading educational institution in the Savannah-Chatham County school district. This in turn commands great expectations from stakeholders.

The Quality Assurance Team heard from all stakeholders a common view of the quest vision of the school for academic and artistic excellence. The community expectations and the satisfaction of stakeholders are simultaneous catalysts which help to continue to drive Savannah Arts Academy to meet its quest vision.

There existed appropriate documentation of a school-wide evaluation system.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:
• Teachers utilize data to inform instructional practices to support continuous improvement.
• The school does an exemplary job of coordination and management of the large volume of student curricular and extracurricular activities.
• All stakeholders share a high degree of satisfaction which is clearly understood by the school leadership.
• The leadership of the school administration provides support for both internal and community satisfaction while seeking to continue to improve high performance to exceptional performance.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:
• The work already done by teachers with data analysis should be formally incorporated into the school’s plan for continuous improvement.
• All improvement initiatives should find a correct fit within the district established improvement plan template so that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of all improvement initiatives within the context of one improvement plan.

Finding: Savannah Arts Academy has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 3: Teaching and Learning

Standard: The school provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

The Savannah Arts Academy provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students. Student achievement data provided from the Georgia Department of Education includes Georgia High School Graduation Test and End of Course Test information.

A hallmark of instruction at the school is the opportunity for students to have active roles in their learning. This is particularly evident, and was observed by the team. The curriculum is reviewed departmentally and annually. Best practices are utilized. The school has recently adopted the curriculum of the American Ballet Theatre in order to enhance the school’s dance program. Interviews with the leadership team and teachers report that the school follows the GADOE Curriculum Frameworks. The leadership team meets every other week to discuss instruction and data analysis. The leadership team does not leave it to the department chairs to provide instructional assistance to teachers.

The connectivity of student to teachers was evidenced during team interviews. The relationships foster student success. This sentiment was echoed by both student and parent stakeholders. The school climate is excellent.

The instructional day is designed to protect instructional time. Creative scheduling is employed in order to provide additional learning time for students and to accommodate CTAE/Fine Arts Pathways. The school has added a myriad of Advanced Placement offerings along with honors courses that provide a higher level of academic rigor.
The school media center provides a welcoming environment for all learners. The media specialist discussed with the team how the center utilizes all existing resources to support student learning.

The use of instructional technology was observed by the team. A comprehensive school level technology plan would provide leadership guidance on strategic next steps with technology integration.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Creative scheduling is employed in order to provide additional learning time to students who need more instruction through afternoon tutorials.
- Evidence of student efficacy for learning is fostered and encouraged with faculty.
- The school offers a myriad of Advanced Placement opportunities enhancing academic rigor.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:**

- Implement more collaborative planning, particularly between arts and academic teachers, to develop instructional strategies to meet individual student needs.
- Implement a systematic approach for articulation among all levels of the school to monitor student performance and develop a systemic plan of next steps which best addresses moving high performance to exceptional performance.
- Develop a comprehensive technology plan at the school level which will ensure that all students and staff members have regular and ready access to instructional technology which will aid in moving high performing students to exceptional performance.

**Finding:** Savannah Arts Academy has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

**Standard 4: Documenting and Using Results**

**Standard:** The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

**Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:**

Savannah Arts Academy utilizes performance measures for student learning that yield information that is reliable, valid, and bias free. Instruments for assessment in grades 9 through 12 include the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT), End-of-Course Tests (EOCT), the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT), and the Advanced Placement (AP). Results from these assessments are utilized in measuring progress toward meeting expectations for student learning.

The school uses assessment data for making decisions for improvement of the teaching and learning processes. In an effort to ensure ongoing analysis and use of data, the school has a Data Room to assist teachers in the use of student test results for instructional planning and to establish school improvement goals. Teachers described how data informed instructional practices during the stakeholder interviews.

In addition to state-mandated assessments, the school incorporates the Arts-dance, music, technology, and visual arts. The desire of the faculty and students of Savannah Arts Academy is to continue to demonstrate
significant gains in student performance and academic achievement.

The school communicates student performance to stakeholders by means of parent meetings and conferences, the school district website, and school newsletters. Savannah Arts strives to enhance data collection and making the data increasing comprehensive and more meaningful in meeting students’ needs.

The school uses trend data in evaluating effectiveness and planning for improvement. The Leadership Team discusses effective interventions for students who need additional tutoring.

The school maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations. The guidance office processes requests for transcripts. Student records are housed in a secure area in the school office, and access to the online parent portal, a component of the Power School data management program, which provides information on student grades and attendance, requires a username and password that must be secured from school personnel. Parents expressed appreciation for timely access to student information, and teachers stated that parents use this online resource.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Data are used consistently to guide instruction and to improve overall school instructional effectiveness.
- The implemented parent portal on PowerSchool provides parents with ready access to current student performance and associated data which has resulted in improved communication for student achievement.
- The students are provided multiple opportunities for after school tutorials.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:**

- Develop data driven interventions to improve student performance in the area of Social Studies.

**Finding:** Savannah Arts Academy has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

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**Standard 5: Resource and Support Systems**

**Standard:** The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

**Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:**

The school recruits, employs, and mentors qualified professional personnel that are capable of fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities. All teachers hold appropriate credentials, and assigned staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision of the school. Interviews with parents, community members, and students indicated that teachers are caring and are supportive of students.

Staff members participate in a variety of professional development activities designed by central office and/or by individual teacher request. There is not, however, a fully developed Professional Development
Plan aligned with school goals. There exists a district-level professional development plan, and staff members from the school participate in professional learning provided by the district. New teachers are paired with mentor teachers to provide successful induction. The teacher mentor program provides a valuable resource for new teacher induction into the school.

The school budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement school improvement initiatives. Interviews revealed that teachers feel they have the necessary resources to implement improvement plans. Staff expressed concern that anticipated reductions in state funding will have a negative impact, possibly resulting in a loss of programs and/or personnel. An interview with school bookkeeper revealed that the school monitors all financial transactions through a recognized accounting system. The school bookkeeper submits to the central office monthly fund accounting reports and successfully complies with annual audit requirements.

Even though the school facility is an older building, it is well maintained and the Parent Teacher Association has initiated several renovations. The central office provides for facilities and equipment maintenance. Teachers and parents indicated that safety should be a priority. The school has a Safety Team to review procedures, update documents, and plan for school-wide safety measures. There is a written security and crisis management plan and emergency evacuation plans. Staff members have been appropriately trained in safety measures, but some teachers stated they felt the need for a resource officer. Stakeholders also expressed concern regarding the number of access points into the facility which may be compromised by unauthorized visitors.

Students have access to guidance services that include, but are not limited to, counseling, mentoring, appraisal, and referral. The school counselor provides classroom guidance and small-group guidance as needed. The gifted coordinator develops the master schedule, which provides diverse course offerings to meet the needs of all students. The school’s counselor, gifted coordinator, and testing coordinator work closely to provide appropriate educational and career planning.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The facility is an historic building but it is well maintained and provides an environment conducive to learning.
- Parents and students stated that the school has a qualified and caring staff that works to ensure student success.
- The guidance counselor and faculty work cooperatively to provide students with educational and career planning.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Develop a Professional Learning Plan aligned with school improvement goals and monitor staff participation in professional growth activities which also addresses the unique needs of Savannah Arts Academy’s quest for exceptional performance.
- Implement professional learning communities to develop and implement a systematic plan of next steps, which best address moving high performance to exceptional performance.
- Review safety plans to ensure school entry points have adequate and appropriate security.

Finding: Savannah Arts Academy has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.
Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

**Standard:** The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

**Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:**

The QAR team noted how Savannah Arts Academy met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence. Savannah Arts Academy seeks and supports opportunities to foster effective communication and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Stakeholders are extremely supportive of the school and its quest for academic and artistic excellence. Several mediums of communication are utilized to communicate with parents. Parents receive weekly updates which are sent out via email. Through the internet, parents can access grade and attendance information through the parent portal in Power School. Weekly announcements are made by the principal where he utilizes an automated caller system. Parent and faculty student surveys are administered to measure satisfaction and climate. Student and parent workshops are held to assist parents with the admissions and audition process.

Students conveyed that the teachers at every level go above and beyond to assist them in achieving academic excellence. The teachers not only want them to learn but they want them to be challenged. There is mutual respect and many of the teachers have evolved to become mentors of sorts to the students during their educational experience. Students believe that their ultimate continued success is based on the positive relationships and support from the faculty that promote student learning.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Communication with parents regarding student information and activities is effectively facilitated through email, newsletter, the school websites, automated caller system and the parent portal.
- Students have an overwhelming sense of focus towards academic and artistic excellence.
- Students reported that they feel connected and supported by their teachers and administrators.
- Parents reported that they felt that the use of technology (email blasts, newsletters, automated caller, etc.) made them feel connected to the school.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:**

- Develop a system to enlist parents and community members in the school improvement process and share the planning and results with other stakeholders.
- Broaden and update annual stakeholder surveys to determine satisfaction and effectiveness of the school’s initiatives.

**Finding:** Savannah Arts Academy has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.
Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement

**Standard:** The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

**Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:**

The Quality Assurance Team interviews with the school’s administrative team noted evidence that there is a goal of continuous improvement of student and teacher performance. The administrative team’s goal of continuous improvement is in alignment with Savannah Arts Academy’s Quest and the vision established by the school district.

The school utilizes a district template to provide all required district level components of a plan for continuous improvement. The plan provided focus for improvement in academic achievement for select Advanced Placement and select math courses as well as history assessments. The overall performance on the SAT was also identified as an area of focus.

Non-academic areas identified for improvement were school safety systems and procedures and financial management. In addition, parental involvement was targeted for enhancement.

Although the goal of continuous improvement is evident, there was little evidence to document the articulation to the stakeholders of a plan to foster continuous improvement. The School Improvement Plan does not delineate a plan for continuous improvement in the achievement of the school’s vision or quest statement.

The plan indicated the involvement of school leadership, data team, faculty, staff, school advisory board and PTSA board; however, interviews with stakeholders were not able to clearly provide substantiation of involvement.

Interviews with the faculty members indicated that there are many professional development opportunities; the administrative team indicated that professional development opportunities are limited due to funding. The review of the artifacts did not uncover a detailed professional development plan specific to support the school’s improvement plan.

The administrative team repeatedly noted the need for more technology in the school and its impact on continuous improvement. However, the review of artifacts did not uncover a technology plan that was specific to Savannah Arts Academy and any ties to the plan for continuous improvement.

**Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:**

- Although the school is a top performing school in Georgia and is nationally ranked, the school administration is continuously seeking to improve instruction in both academics and the arts.
- Faculty members continually seek to improve students’ performance regardless of the need for more technology in the school.
- Faculty members are afforded content area specific professional development opportunities, although the funding is limited.

**Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the**
school:
- Develop a professional learning plan which addresses the unique needs of the school.
- Develop a comprehensive technology plan that is specific to the needs of the school.
- Involve all stakeholders in the key benchmarks of the development of the continuous plan for improvement.
- Ensure stakeholders are provided annual reports based upon the success and areas in need of further improvement as evidenced by data points used to determine continuous improvement.

Finding: Savannah Arts Academy has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.
Conclusion

The commendations and required actions in this report are designed to focus the school on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student performance and school effectiveness. While powerful in potential, the commendations and required actions only have meaning when acted upon by the school. The strength of this report lies in the school's commitment to using the findings to continuously improve. The key is action. The school is encouraged to use the report as a call to action, a tool to sustain momentum in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The team identified required actions for improvement that the school will need to address. Following this review, the school will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the School Administration, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for their hospitality throughout the visit. The team wishes the school and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS-CASI-GA accreditation with AdvancED.
Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Mr. Gregory E. Arnsdorff, Chair/Lead Evaluator (Effingham County School System)
- Mrs. Aurelia E. Moss, Team Member (Savannah Christian Preparatory School)
- Dr. Jessica M. Swain, Team Member (Baldwin High School)
- Dr. Brenda D. Stone, Team Member (Atkinson County High School)

AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

The AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. As schools reach higher levels of implementation of the standards, they will have a greater capacity to support ever-increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. Each of the seven standards listed below has corresponding indicators and impact statements which can be accessed at www.advanc-ed.org.

Vision and Purpose
The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.

Governance and Leadership
The school provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and school effectiveness.

Teaching and Learning
The school provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Documenting and Using Results
The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

Resource and Support Systems
The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement
The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.