

December 16, 2019

Dr. Demond Means, Superintendent
Clarke County School System
440-1 Dearing Extension
Athens, GA 30606-2043

Dear Dr. Means:

This letter follows-up our August 9, 2019 notification to Clarke County School System requesting a written response to complaints received by Cognia against the district. Accordingly, Cognia is in receipt of the requested written response dated September 13, 2019. Thank you for submitting this information.

Based on our review of the information contained in the September 13, 2019 response letter and its accompanying exhibits), Cognia has determined that an onsite Special Review is warranted. This decision is also supported by additional complaints received against the district since our August 9, 2019 notification to you. The nature of the additional complaints align with the allegations that the conduct of some members of the Board of Education is interfering with the Board's ability to function responsibly and effectively as a Board and is impeding the autonomy of the district leadership to meet goals for achievement and instruction in addition to effective management of day-to-day operations of the district.

As cited in the August 9, 2019 notification letter, the nature of the complaints suggests that Clarke County School System may not be adhering to *AdvancED Performance Standards for School Systems*, as listed. The Special Review will focus on the complaint allegations in relation to the listed Accreditation Standards.

- Standard 1.4: The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support system effectiveness.
- Standard 1.5: The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.
- Standard 1.7: Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.
- Standard 2.1: Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the system.
- Standard 2.11: Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.

A Special Review Team, comprised of trained professionals, will be appointed to conduct the Special Review. The Special Review will provide all parties with the opportunity to review information and evidence related to the above listed Accreditation Standards. Any findings of the Team will be substantiated through the *AdvancED Performance Standards for School Systems*, *AdvancED Accreditation Policies and Assurances*. The Review Team will provide Improvement Priorities, if necessary, that will require decisive action for correction on the part of the district with follow-up documentation submitted to Cognia within a timeframe as identified by Cognia. Also, a written report of the Special Review will be provided to Clarke County School System.

We will work with you to select mutually agreeable dates for the Special Review. Also, the team roster will be provided to you upon its confirmation.

Clarke County School System is responsible for all costs associated with the on-site Special Review, including the Special Review fee of \$4,200 plus all related travel costs of the Special Review Team.

Clarke County School System is expected to accommodate and support all aspects of the Special Review. Expectations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Identify and make available a district contact person for communication and coordination with Cognia and the Lead Evaluator of the Special Review Team.
- Prepare and submit into eProve Workspace any documents and evidence representative of the district relevant to the cited Accreditation Standards and complaint allegations.
- Host the Special Review Team on the dates agreed upon by the district and Cognia.
- Assist in arranging for interviews of Board of Education members, district leadership staff, school-level staff, and other stakeholder individuals as requested by the Special Review Team Lead Evaluator.
- Enable access to digital platforms as requested by the Special Review Team Lead Evaluator.
- Assist in coordinating and scheduling school visits/observations that may be requested by the Special Review Team Lead Evaluator.

Moving forward, the Lead Evaluator will work with the district's designated contact person to develop the Special Review Schedule and other logistical details. Please forward the name and contact information for your district's contact person to Dr. Claudia Carter, Senior Vice President, at claudia.carter@cognia.org.

Please contact Dr. Carter with any questions regarding the Special Review or for further information.

Sincerely,



Annette Bohling, J.D.
Chief Certification Officer
Cognia

Encl: AdvancED Performance Standards for School Systems
AdvancED Performance Standards for School Systems with Key Concepts
AdvancED Policies and Procedures for Accreditation and Certification Updated June 29, 2018