

4.27.20

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ACCREDITING AGENCY COGNIA RELEASES SPECIAL REVIEW REPORT

Athens, Georgia — On April 24, 2020, Dr. Xernona Thomas, interim superintendent, received notification from the accreditation agency Cognia (formerly AdvancED) informing the Clarke County School District of a change in its accreditation status from “Accredited” to “Accredited Under Review.”

The document *Policies and Procedures for Accreditation and Certification* (Cognia/AdvancED), contains a detailed description of the accreditation status. As defined, a system with an “Accredited Under Review” status will continue with that status until the school district hosts a Monitoring Review. Cognia will use the Monitoring Review to evaluate CCSD to determine if progress is adequate or suggest additional action.

Allegations sent to Cognia last fall regarding the operations of the school district resulted in Cognia’s decision to conduct a Special Review, held on January 26—28, 2020. Cognia provided a Special Review Report, which included findings and Improvement Priorities, with the requirement that the district take decisive actions. Cognia requires a “Monitoring Review” to be conducted before December 2020 to evaluate the school district’s progress in addressing the Improvement Priorities listed in report.

“The report provides specific tasks the district can take to resolve issues and improve effectiveness. We will immediately work with the Board of Education on improvement measures and documenting changes, with the full expectation of meeting the December 2020 timeframe and having full accreditation status reinstated,” states Dr. Xernona Thomas.

This change in status does not impact CCSD’s graduating seniors as the district is still accredited by Cognia. The district does not anticipate negative effects for future graduates as the BOE and district administrators will work to address all directives provided within the report. “Although we recognize the status change is disconcerting, the district will use this opportunity to address concerns and implement specific steps to achieve positive change,” stated Dr. Thomas.

“In addition to our ongoing training through the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA), the members of the BOE embrace this opportunity to improve its effectiveness,” states Dr. LaKeisha Gantt, board president. “We have begun work on our norms and are committed to policy review to maximize our performance as a governance board. We will accommodate and support all aspects of the review.”

The [documentation related to the Cognia Special Review](#) is posted on the Clarke County School District’s website.

###

Media Contact

Beth Moore

Communications Manager

Clarke County School District • clarke.k12.ga.us

beth.moore@clarke.k12.ga.us • 706-546-7721, Ext. 20703

RELATED DOCUMENTS (LOCATED ON CLARKE.K12.GA.US)

Documents Related to Cognia Special Review - Posted 4/27/20

- [Clarke County Accreditation Status Letter - 3.31.20](#)
- [Clarke County School System Special Review Report - 215148](#)
- [AdvancED Policies and Procedures for Accreditation and Certification - Effective June 29, 2018](#)

Documents Related to the Cognia Complaint

- [Notice of Special Review \(sent by Cognia to CCSD\) - 12.19.19](#)
- [Statement Provided to BOE President and Vice President by Superintendent Demond Means at BOE Meeting - 9.13.19](#)
- [Response to AdvancED by Superintendent Demond Means - 9.13.19](#)

Cognia Information

- [Cognia Website](#) (Accreditation and Certification)
- [AdvancED Performance Standards](#)
- [AdvancED Policies and Procedures for Accreditation and Certification](#)