

Centerville-Abington Community Schools
Summary of the COGNIA/NCA ACCREDITATION REVIEW report from Feb. 2023

The Cognia/NCA Accreditation Review was conducted on Feb. 20-24, 2023 by an independent team of Cognia professional educators who spent four days on-site in the Centerville-Abington Community Schools (CACS) reviewing documents, listening to presentations, conducting interviews and rating classrooms in the four schools.

The school system received a 31 page report in May of 2023 with 30 research-based Cognia Standards which were rated by the team. The ratings ranged from a low of "1" to a high of "4." Centerville-Abington Schools had 11 Standards rated with the highest score of "4" and 19 Standards rated a "3." There were no Standards rated a "2" or a "1". Although there were no Standards rated in the lowest two categories, the Cognia team indicated there were two areas where the school district could strengthen the system through continuous improvement.

The first recommendation by the Cognia evaluators is to create and implement a structured succession plan to formalize our successful practices. For example, the system lacks the policies and/or administrative guidelines to preserve the many powerful practices that make our students and schools successful. Without formalizing and codifying these noteworthy practices, a change in leadership positions could dismantle the processes we have used as best practices for years. For instance, our schools have been using a successful process to promote communication and gain input from school stakeholders at the building level. This best practice is the long-standing Change Committee process which is active in each school. In this process, teachers and administrators meet monthly to discuss topics for possible change at the building level. This practice emphasizes the importance of stakeholder input into the decision-making process which is foundational to a successful school. The School Change Committee meetings are a forum for all faculty to discuss and possibly make recommendations to the leadership for change at the school or even the system level.

The second recommendation from the Cognia evaluation team is to formalize the curriculum writing and alignment process begun in 2021 in all grade levels and content areas from K-12. Adding the expectation for curriculum development into a formal document should guarantee equity in curriculum offerings and hold staff accountable for planning lessons based on state Standards.

The report cited many noteworthy practices that need to be preserved. Some of these best practices include: the district's focus on the mission, vision, and guiding principles of the school system, the positive culture in the buildings promoted by More Than Words, Character Strong, Trust Based Relational Interventions (TBRI) and the Communities In School (CIS) program as well as the Dollars for Scholars initiative.

Other effective practices cited in the report were the use of Vertical Teams in content areas with staff who meet to review assessment results with Instructional Coaches and then discuss new teaching strategies. The team encouraged the district to continue the school Improvement planning process in the buildings, 1:1 technology integration, and curriculum mapping processes with resources adopted at the school board level. They mentioned the outstanding work of the Instructional Coaches and the highly effective teaching faculty in all four buildings. The evaluation team gave the district high marks for our community partnerships, the comprehensive offerings of Dual Credit and AP courses at the high school, the early intervention and special education programs at all levels and the EXCEL program for high ability learners as well as the Bulldog Opportunity Academy supporting students who need to earn credits to graduate.

The Cognia team commented on the schools' best practice of a balanced assessment system with not only the state assessments of ILEARN, PSAT and SAT, and IREAD 3 but also the continued use of formative assessments like STAR, and mClass in the primary building. NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments were mentioned as a best practice in K-12 to determine progress over time and in comparison with not only other Indiana schools but also schools throughout the nation. The Cognia evaluators mentioned the positive influence of system and school-level leaders as well as teachers continually making decisions regarding student academic growth and well-being based on data in our continuous improvement model of always striving toward excellence.

The Cognia team rated the school system with an Index of Educational Quality of 353 on a scale of 100-400 as a holistic measure of the district and schools' success rate. This score is in the highest range of success for all 43,000 institutions involved in the Cognia Accreditation Review process throughout the fifty states and in 70 countries around the world.