

Performance Standards

cognia™

**Charter School
Authorizer**

Corporations

Digital Learning

Early Learning

Education Service
Agencies

Postsecondary

Schools

Special Purpose

Systems

In 2018, leading education nonprofits AdvancED® and Measured Progress® came together. With more than a century of experience in accreditation and school improvement and decades of leadership in student assessment solutions, the new organization—Cognia™—brings institutions around the world a new, holistic way to view school performance and student achievement.

To assure that our Performance Standards remain relevant and forward-thinking, we undertake review and development of our Standards on a recurring 5-year cycle. We expect to publish new Cognia standards early in 2021; accreditation reviews based on the new standards will begin in school year 2022–23. The AdvancED Performance Standards in this document remain in effect until then.

AdvancED® Performance Standards



Continuous improvement that results in success for all learners should be the goal of every institution. The *Improvement Journey* for each institution may look different but should always include measures of quality of learning and instruction. The *AdvancED Performance Standards* serve this purpose by providing a set of evaluative criteria that lays the foundation for improvement planning and implementation. Based on rigorous research and best practices, the Standards are a powerful tool for driving institutional change.

AdvancED is committed to quality and meeting the needs of the educational institutions we serve. Every five years, we use an iterative process to review, revise and renew our Standards to ensure they remain relevant and challenge institutions to reach higher. Our guiding question is: What will support the success of each and every learner?

The *AdvancED Performance Standards* embody our belief that high quality learning can transform lives, communities and the world.

Anatomy of the *AdvancED Performance Standards*

The new Standards, varying in number based on institution type, are organized under three Domains:

- 1** Leadership Capacity
- 2** Learning Capacity
- 3** Resource Capacity

The Domains are statements that define the capacity of an organization or institution to provide quality and meet the rigorous demands of continuous improvement. Each Domain is further defined by Standards, which in turn, are defined by Performance Rubrics.

The *AdvancED Performance Standards* are research-based statements that describe conditions that are necessary for institutions to support organizational effectiveness and improve student performance.

In addition to the Domains and accompanying Standards, two Performance Rubrics also are aligned to the Standards to help provide measurable progress and an overall assessment of practices. The Rubrics act as a diagnostic tool, each consisting of four performance levels, that contain evaluative criteria related to concepts contained within the Standard statement.

Collectively, the elements of the *AdvancED Performance Standards* serve as a road map for the continuous improvement process for institutions and as the foundation of the accreditation process used by AdvancED Review Teams to provide relevant and quality feedback on how institutions are serving the learner.

1

Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution’s progress towards its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution’s leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to implement strategies that improve results of learning and professional practice.

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- Standard 1.1:** The authorizer commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about learning, including the expectations for the organization.
 - Standard 1.2:** Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the authorizer’s purpose.
 - Standard 1.3:** The authorizer engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving professional practice and organizational effectiveness.
 - Standard 1.4:** The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support institutional effectiveness.
 - Standard 1.5:** The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.
 - Standard 1.6:** The authorizer provides board members with professional development opportunities that cover the following charter school-related topics: academic results, effective governance and leadership, legal compliance, board and charter school leadership relationships, finance and budgeting.
 - Standard 1.7:** The authorizer has a system to oversee compliance with the terms of the charter contracts and all applicable laws.
 - Standard 1.8:** The authorizer demonstrates that it has evaluated the academic, financial and operational performance for all charter contracts prior to authorizing or reauthorizing charter contracts.
 - Standard 1.9:** Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.
 - Standard 1.10:** Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness.
 - Standard 1.11:** The authorizer has a transparent application process that clearly states the authorizer’s expectations.
 - Standard 1.12:** Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the organization’s purpose and direction.
 - Standard 1.13:** The authorizer provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.
 - Standard 1.14:** Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.

2

Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning is the primary expectation of every institution. The establishment of a learning culture built on high expectations for learning along with quality programs and services, which include an analysis of results, are all key indicators of an institution's impact on teaching and learning.

- Standard 2.1:** The authorizer's program and services are developed and implemented to meet the needs of its authorized schools.
- Standard 2.2:** The authorizer implements equitable, relevant and targeted programs and/or services for its authorized schools.
- Standard 2.3:** The authorizer implements programs and services that ensure adult learners' needs are met and that staff are engaged in deeper learning experiences.
- Standard 2.4:** The authorizer gathers, analyzes, and uses formative and summative data to improve the delivery of programs and services.
- Standard 2.5:** The authorizer implements a process to continuously assess programs, services and organizational conditions to improve organizational effectiveness.
- Standard 2.6:** The authorizer implements a process to address academic performance issues of authorized schools through intervention strategies designed to promote student achievement and growth.

3

Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources must be aligned and supportive of the needs of the organization and institutions served. Organizations ensure that resources are aligned with the stated mission and distributed equitably so that the needs of the organization are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes the support for the professional learning for all staff. The organization examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, and organizational effectiveness.

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- Standard 3.1:** The authorizer plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment and organizational effectiveness.
 - Standard 3.2:** The organization’s professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve organizational effectiveness.
 - Standard 3.3:** The authorizer provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve organizational effectiveness.
 - Standard 3.4:** The authorizer attracts and retains qualified personnel that support the organization’s purpose and direction.
 - Standard 3.5:** The authorizer integrates digital resources into operations to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness, as well as to support program and service delivery.
 - Standard 3.6:** The authorizer reviews financial statements for its authorized schools and provides monitoring and feedback.
 - Standard 3.7:** The authorizer demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the organization’s purpose and direction.
 - Standard 3.8:** The authorizer allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the organization’s identified needs and priorities to improve organizational effectiveness.

About Cognia

Cognia™ is a global nonprofit that has the knowledge to help schools improve. Cognia offers accreditation and certification, assessment, professional learning, and improvement services. The result of the merger of AdvancED and Measured Progress, Cognia was formed to bridge the gap between school evaluation and student assessment. We are the largest education improvement organization in the world and an undeniable force for enhancing schools, engaging students, and driving better outcomes for all.

Find out more at cognia.org.



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