# This is an information paper

**MEMO TO:** Members of the Board of Education

**FROM:** Nannette Johnston, Superintendent

**DATE:** March 19, 2015

**RE:** District-Wide Accreditation through SACS and AdvancED

Hardin County Schools is pursuing district-wide accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and AdvancED. AdvancED Systems Accreditation provides a national protocol for school systems committed to systemic, systematic, and sustainable continuous improvement. The Systems Accreditation process invites school systems to collaborate in reviewing the quality of the district’s systems and their contributions to teaching and learning. The process supports, enhances, and stimulates growth and improvement throughout the school system.

To earn Systems Accreditation, the school system and its schools must:

1. Host a Readiness Review to determine the district’s capacity to engage in the Systems Accreditation process.
2. Meet the accreditation standards.
3. Define and demonstrate the use of a continuous improvement process.
4. Host a Systems Accreditation External Review team at least once every five years.
5. Complete annual information updates and submit annual dues.

If successful in this process, all schools in the Hardin County School District will be accredited through the SACS system. The total cost to the board for district-wide accreditation for a five-year period will be approximately $85,000 ($17,000 per year) for fees, with visit for review expenses for the five years totaling approximately $11,000. If the district does not pursue district-wide accreditation and leaves this process up to each school, the visit for review fees over the same five year period are approximately $24,000 (the accreditation fees are the same amount, approximately $17,000 per year). By pursuing district-wide accreditation as opposed to individual school accreditation, the savings to the district over a five year period will be approximately $13,000.

The Systems Accreditation External Review will take place March 28-31, 2016. On March 29th, members of the review team will interview employees at Central Office, as well as all members of the HCS Board of Education. Board members are asked to be available for interviews here at Central Office during the afternoon of March 29th. These interviews, along with interviews and observations at our schools, will help the review team identify areas of strength, determine if accreditation is warranted, and help identify any areas of growth needed for the district.

The review will conclude on Thursday, March 31st, and a special Board Meeting will take place for the purpose of the review team presenting their report. The Board meeting will tentatively be scheduled for Thursday, March 31st at 1:00 P.M.