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The Academy for the Arts, Science, and Technology Achieves AdvancED STEM Certification

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, April 28, 2016 - AdvancED congratulates The Academy for the Arts, Science, and Technology (AAST) on receiving AdvancED STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Certification as an accredited whole school STEM site. This achievement is a mark of STEM distinction and excellence only offered to highly effective institutions that prioritize STEM education as a path to success.

AdvancED STEM Certification is the first internationally recognized mark of quality for STEM schools and programs, signaling the growing emphasis placed on STEM education by educators, politicians and business leaders around the world. In earning this certification, AAST has demonstrated its commitment to preparing its students for their educational and career opportunities of the future by ensuring its students will have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their postsecondary pursuits and as workforce contributors in the 21st-century economy.

In order to earn STEM Certification, AAST had to demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED STEM Standard as reflected by the school's performance across 11 rigorous STEM Indicators. The certification process provides a rigorous evaluation and continuous improvement process, supported by research-based tools and resources. Achieving high scores across the indicators certify that students have been equipped and trained to be innovative, creative and systematic problem-solvers across disciplines.

"We are proud to be an AdvancED STEM Certified School. This certification exhibits AAST's commitment to addressing workforce needs by preparing our students with the relevant skills and experiences to succeed while demonstrating to the private-sector that we are committed to driving higher levels of student achievement for their STEM pipeline," said Robin Jones, AAST's principal, "STEM certification will continue to uphold our school to high standards while providing a clear roadmap for us to continuously improve our STEM disciplines and program. We are also very proud to have earned a whole school STEM certification status."

AdvancEd STEM whole school certification is awarded to schools that have implemented STEM learning as the core component of their curriculum for *all students* within the school. STEM Program certification is awarded to schools that have a STEM program offered to a *cohort* of students within the school. Currently there are 40 schools internationally certified under this process.

AdvancED's STEM Certification Reviewers examined AAST's evidence of quality STEM education that the school provided to the review team beforehand, and conducted classroom observations focused on identifying student engagement and collaboration in the learning process using the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool™ (eleot™). Reviewers also interviewed key stakeholders such as school administrators, STEM faculty and staff, parents, students, and external business and industry partners in order to verify the school's commitment to connecting students' STEM experiences in the classroom to the local community and the world at large.

To learn more about AdvancED STEM Certification, contact AdvancED at STEMCertification@advanc-ed.org. For more background on AdvancED's products and services that support institutions in their continuous improvement efforts visit www.advanc-ed.org.

AAST is a 9-12 STEM school located in Horry County South Carolina. AAST is recognized as a high-performing Career and Technology Education center with a longstanding reputation for innovation and excellence. AAST has previously earned the designation of National Blue Ribbon School and in 2014 was recognized by the Southern Regional Education Board as a Platinum High Achieving site (top 1%) school in their network of 1200 *High Schools That Work* member sites. The school offers application entry points in the 9th and 11th grades. Students across the community have the opportunity to apply to the four-year STEM education program or to the two-year STEM/STEAM (arts-integration) career-focused major strands. The focus strands include STEM Studies, Advanced Art, Computer Science, Digital Communications, Entertainment Technology, Pre-Engineering, Pre-Medicine, and Theatre. AAST's program design recognizes that students' interests in STEM areas are greatly enhanced when they are offered the opportunity to explore arts and humanities electives to support their interest in pursuing careers in STEAM innovation. The school embraces the concept that discovery is part of the process of science and that opportunities for student invention and creativity are requisite for innovation to occur. AAST also offers students a variety of rigorous academic options designed to prepare students for their post-secondary goals and career goals. The school has adopted the Koi fish as its mascot. Like the Koi, which will grow as large as its environment will allow, the students at AAST are encouraged to take advantage of the many great learning opportunities the school has to offer as a means of fostering their individual growth. More information about AAST can be found on the school website <http://aast.horrycountyschools.net/>

About AdvancED

AdvancED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization serving the largest community of education professionals in the world. Founded on more than 100 years of work in continuous improvement, AdvancED combines the knowledge and expertise of a research institute, the skills of a management consulting firm and the passion of a grassroots movement for educational change to empower PreK-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.

AdvancED operates three regional accrediting agencies and serves as a trusted partner to 32,000 schools and school systems—employing more than four million educators and enrolling more than 20 million students—across the United States and 70 countries.