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OCEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

STRATEGIC PLAN SY 2014/15 – SY 2016/17

APPROVED AUGUST 2014

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## SECTION I: Strategic Planning Background and Approach

In May 2012, the Georgia Board of Education voted to make Fulton County Schools the state's largest charter system. The Charter System Model offers freedom and flexibility, both at the school level and system-wide, to employ research-based methods to improve student achievement, even if such innovations would require exemptions to current state laws and regulations.

Given the new Charter System framework, individual schools within Fulton County have the ability to work in dramatically new ways. We are asking our communities to help drive change and to get involved in our schools. Our collective vision is that every Fulton County school will have a principal and local School Governance Council equipped to effectively lead in a charter system environment to improve student achievement through innovation and flexibility. Schools will be empowered to consider the best uses of resources at the local level and design innovative practices that align with school needs.

Ocee Elementary School began the strategic planning process in the spring of 2014. In order to plan our strategic direction forward, we first had to engage with our community to understand our specific challenges and consider a path to collectively address them. The Ocee Leadership Team, School Governance Council, and the staff of Ocee ES were involved in the process of gathering and reviewing data, both qualitative and quantitative (i.e., standardized test scores, attendance records, demographic data, stakeholder perceptions, etc.), and drawing conclusions about the strengths and areas for growth of the school.

Our process included five distinct phases: (1) a needs assessment; (2) the identification of priority issues; (3) the establishment of long-term outcomes, focus areas, and short-term goals; (4) the formulation of strategic initiative; and (5) the development of a monitoring plan. Developed over a period of several months and designed collaboratively with input and guidance from many stakeholders, the strategic plan represents our deliberate approach to shape and guide what Ocee Elementary School is, what we do, and why. Our students deserve the best educational experience we can provide, and this plan sets our vision and direction for making that happen.

## SECTION II: Context for the Strategic Plan: The School's Needs Assessment

For every school, the strategic planning process must begin with a thorough consideration of the questions “Where are we as a school?” and “With what do we have to work?” By identifying strengths and weaknesses within the school and examining opportunities and challenges within the external environment, schools lay the foundation for building a strategic plan that builds on their positive attributes while overcoming any weaknesses or areas for improvement.

**Ocee Elementary School** began the strategic planning process by conducting a needs assessment. Through a close analysis of the internal and external environments, we sought to identify stakeholders’ perceptions of our school and enhance our understanding of the political, socio-economic, and demographic environment in which the school operates. By analyzing a comprehensive set of school data and reviewing school-based surveys and external school reviews, the leaders of **Ocee Elementary School** clarified performance trends and identified the school’s most critical areas for improvement.

### Needs Assessment – Process & Summary of Findings

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The members of the School Governance Council (including parents, school staff, and community members), the Ocee ES Leadership Team (consisting of teachers, administrators, and ancillary staff members), and Ocee staff met at various times to conduct a needs assessment in preparation for the creation of the school’s strategic plan. External influences on the community were considered as well as a variety of data presented in several formats (standardized test scores, demographic information, attendance statistics, school community survey results, anecdotal contributions from staff, etc.).

It was determined that there is very little new construction in the school zone; registration numbers are fairly stable and consistent. However, there was significant public commentary about a plan to build a large industrial-sized car wash across the street from the school. While traffic patterns are a concern in terms of safety of students going to and coming from school, there was agreement that the addition of a car wash to the landscape will not impact attendance or student achievement. No other external factors were uncovered.

The school Leadership Team and members of grade level teams completed a self-assessment tool for strategic resource use – SchoolCheck (Education Resource Strategies). The results of this survey indicated that strengths for Ocee are: teams of teachers support each other and collaborate to share knowledge and expertise; new teachers are well-supported; special education and ESOL services are integrated and aligned with core instruction; time for core subjects is maximized and protected; and teachers are evaluated in a way that is rigorous and fair. Areas for growth in the school according to the SchoolCheck survey are: providing sufficient time and support for instructional experts to organize student data and material to guide teacher team discussions; systems for identification and triage of Tier 2 and 3 students and the integration of support services and teachers; and providing sufficient time for struggling students to catch up.

**ERS (Education Resource Strategies) SchoolCheck – A self-assessment tool for strategic resource use.**

**Identified Strengths**

1	Assemble teams of teachers who share learning goals to include needed combinations of knowledge and expertise	3.3*
2	New and struggling teachers are provided with deep and ongoing targeted support	3.9*
3	Special education and ELL services are integrated into the school’s skill-based grouping strategy and align seamlessly with core instruction	3.8*
4	Allocation of instructional time reflects prioritization of core academics and highest priority areas	3.6*
5	Teachers are evaluated through a mix of formal and informal evaluations in a way that is regular, rigorous, and fair	3.7*

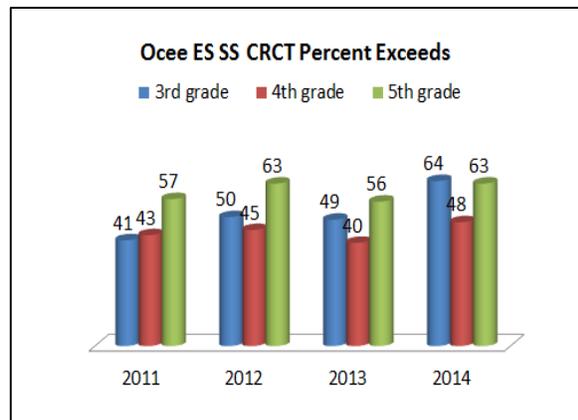
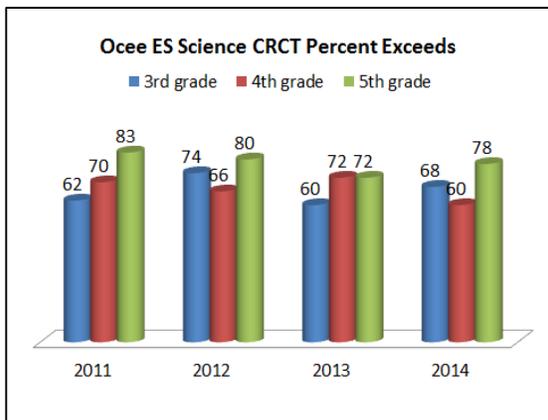
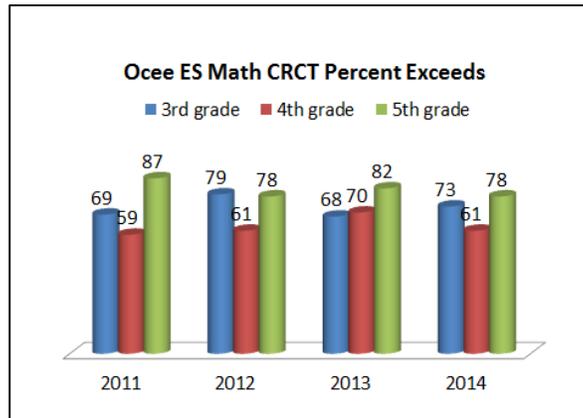
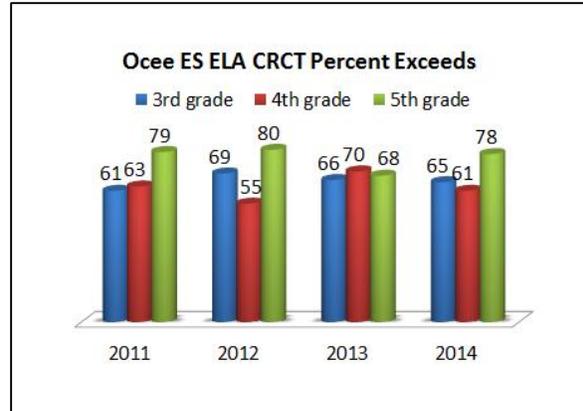
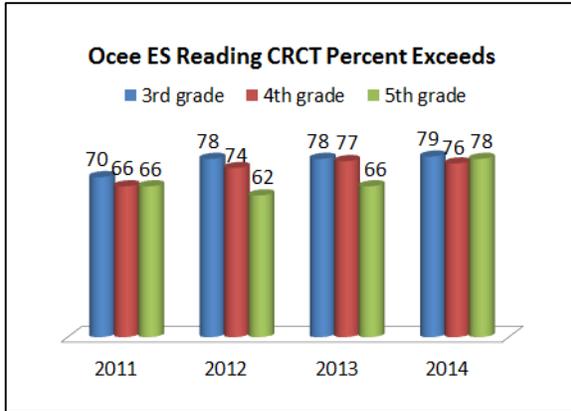
**Identified Areas for Growth**

1	Provide instructional experts with sufficient time and support to organize student data and material to guide discussions	1.4*
2	Systems for identification and triage of Tier 2 and 3 are in place, and link students to outside providers where necessary; feedback loop exists between classroom teachers and intensive support services	1.9*
3	Sufficient time exists for struggling students to catch up	1.3*

(Rating Scale: 1-4 points assigned with 4 points the highest possible score)

After a review of various data points, the School Governance Council and the Leadership Team concluded that Ocee students demonstrate solid student achievement overall. One hundred percent of students in grades 3, 4, and 5 met or exceeded standards on the 2014 Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) in reading; 96% of third graders, 91% of fourth graders, and 100% of all fifth graders met or exceeded standards in math on the CRCT. Overall, well over half of all Ocee students who participate in the CRCT exceed standards in all five test areas (except 4<sup>th</sup> grade social studies where 48% exceeded standards). Scores for third and fifth graders on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) indicate that the average score for third grade reading is 83%, and 88% is the average for math. Ocee fifth graders scored 84% on average in reading and 91% on average in math. Ninety-nine percent of Ocee fifth graders met or exceeded standards on the Georgia 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Assessment.

The charts below provide a series of data points depicting the percentage of Ocee ES students in grades three, four, and five who exceeded standards on the CRCT in reading, English/language arts, math, science and social studies over the past four years (from 2011 through 2014).



While this trend data depict a high percentage of students exceeding standards over the past four years, the recent information about a change in the cut scores for students that will occur with the new Georgia Milestones Assessment to debut in the spring of 2015 suggests that scores in the exceeds category will drop significantly at Ocee based on more rigorous test questions and performance expectations. For example, using the new cut scores to measure student performance in the exceeds category for the CRCT 2014 could result in third grade reading scores – exceeds dropping from 79% to 32%; fourth grade reading scores – exceeds could move from 76% to 24%; and fifth grade reading scores – exceeds could decrease from 78% to 46%. Ocee staff

members recognize that challenging students to think more critically and providing more rigorous content and learning processes will be necessary in order to help them perform at the commendable (exceeds) level on the new Georgia assessment.

Currently, about 782 students are enrolled at Ocee ES. It is a diverse student body with 47% white, 28% Asian, 13% African-American, and 12% Hispanic. The student population is almost equally divided with less than one percent more girls than boys. The population is fairly stable with a 14.9% mobility rate, and attendance is generally good for almost all students. Discipline is not considered a problem at the school – only 76 office referrals were noted in 2013-14.

The Ocee Elementary staff met as a group to discuss the strengths and areas for growth of the school. Strengths as identified by teachers included: assessment, differentiation, support for struggling learners, time provided for planning, support for new teachers, and opportunities for parent involvement and support from parents. Areas for growth as identified by teachers included: use of assessments and time to analyze assessment data, lack of resources aligned to common core standards, challenging learning activities for the “middle level” learners, lack of consistencies with behavior expectations across grade levels and special areas, increase in meetings which take away planning time, and increases in class size.

The School Governance Council Outreach and Communications Committee created a survey to capture the perceptions and suggestions of all stakeholders in an effort to gather data to inform the strategic plan. The survey was publicized and available for one month in the spring. The Committee analyzed the results of the survey and concluded that the vast majority of respondents felt positively about the school with regard to communication, parent involvement, a welcoming environment, social/emotional support of students, and academically challenging environment (80% rated those areas with either a 4 or a 5 – with 5 being the top score and 1 being the lowest score). However, Ocee was rated with more 4s than 5s in the area of academically challenging. Several parents (less than 10) commented that students who are performing on level are not challenged enough at school.

Comments on the survey indicated that the top three areas of strength for Ocee are: teaching, instruction, and academic expectations; welcoming and safe environment; and communication. The top three areas for growth were: active learning and challenging activities for students; information provided to parents about student progress – academic levels and support - as shared by teachers; and establishing social norms for behavior and school-wide behavior expectations.

After reviewing all the survey data and commentary and the additional school data mentioned above (standardized test scores, demographics, attendance and discipline statistics, and staff meeting conclusions) the School Governance Council identified three areas for growth to be included in the school’s strategic plan: academically challenging and rigorous learning for all students; 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking skills including use of technology; and character/social development (including diversity appreciation and resilience). The Leadership Team considered the survey results and staff meeting commentary in June and identified long term outcomes, focus areas, short term goals, and strategic initiatives to meet those goals. Several members of the Council met again in June to complete the School Strategic Plan – short form (see attached) and to revise the outcomes, goals, and initiatives.

### SECTION III: Long-term Outcomes

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#### **LONG-TERM OUTCOME 1.** Increase student achievement and academic growth.

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While Ocee Elementary students have traditionally demonstrated high levels of achievement, the community survey results and staff feedback revealed that parents and teachers believe our students need to be challenged academically. More Ocee students could be exceeding standards on standardized tests. Survey results and teacher commentary indicated that meaningful use of technology was necessary to increase student engagement in the learning process and to provide students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Survey results also indicated that students must develop higher order thinking skills in order to successfully process rigorous, inquiry-based content.

- Students will show higher than average growth on Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) and Student Learning Objectives (SLOs).

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#### **LONG-TERM OUTCOME 2.** Extend student ownership of academic growth.

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An area of focus that emerged from the school community survey was the need to provide more communication about student progress to parents. In order to extend student ownership of academic growth, school staff will routinely analyze data from formal and informal student assessments in order to inform instruction. This routine review of data will enable teachers to assist students in setting individual academic goals; students will be able to share these goals and their progress with parents. Teachers will also share information about classroom activities and student growth to parents.

- Teachers will communicate information to parents regarding specific measures of their students' academic progress in addition to report cards and progress skills checklists.

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#### **LONG-TERM OUTCOME 3.** Develop respectful, responsible, and resilient students.

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Research has shown that students who are comfortable taking risks, able to handle adversity, and willing to listen to the opinions of others while developing their own perspectives become well-rounded citizens who learn to contribute effectively to society. In response to needs identified by the community, parents, and staff, Ocee students will participate in activities and lessons reinforcing the need to demonstrate positive character traits. We envision Ocee students who are confident, adaptable, culturally aware, and excited to be lifelong learners.

Note: Ocee ES is working to identify the most appropriate measures for this long-term outcome.

**SECTION IV: Focus Areas, Short-Term Goals, and Strategic Initiatives**

**FOCUS AREA 1.** Higher Order Thinking Skills – Students will utilize higher order thinking skills in all content areas.

Ocee students perform well on standardized tests. However, survey results and Ocee teacher and staff feedback suggest that students need to be encouraged to think more critically: to find evidence to support their thinking, to evaluate information objectively, and to be able to participate in peer discussions where topics are explored and analyzed. Staff will work to increase rigor across all content areas.

<p><b>As measures of progress, we will:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show that all teachers have completed a Curriculum and Strategies (Talented and Gifted) course designed to train them how to encourage their students to use higher order thinking skills as well as other professional development opportunities.</li> <li>2. Show improvement in teacher ratings on TKES Performance Standard #8 Academically Challenging Environment.</li> <li>3. Development and utilize a specific rigor/student engagement monitoring tool and track teacher performance through observations of lessons.</li> <li>4. Provide evidence of an increase in the appropriate use of technology as a teaching and learning tool through the use of the TIM-O (technology integration matrix observation tool).</li> </ol>
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**Summary of Strategic Initiatives:**

- Incorporate inspired classroom learning environments.
- Increase the use of technology in classrooms: iPad cart, laptop cart, online learning and reporting components, etc.
- All teachers will participate in staff development to increase their understanding of HOTS and rigor.

**FOCUS AREA 2.** Data Utilization – School staff will routinely analyze and communicate data to inform instruction and set goals.

Data will be analyzed in specified grade level meetings and used to inform instruction; teachers will use technology to communicate information to parents (i.e., websites, blogs, etc.).

<p><b>As measures of progress, we will:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show improvement in teacher ratings on TKES Performance Standard #6 Assessment Uses</li> <li>2. Provide documentation as evidence of communication to parents about student progress in addition to report cards.</li> </ol>
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**Summary of Strategic Initiatives:**

- Provide training and coaching to teachers on how to utilize data effectively.
- Standardize data sharing processes across the school community in order to keep parents informed of their students’ progress.

**FOCUS AREA 3.** Character Development – The school community will help students develop a strong positive character.

Character development has always been a focus for Ocee ES. The Ocee Character Committee will increase efforts to provide guidance to teachers and staff regarding ways to emphasize the importance of demonstrating good character traits and celebrate students who exhibit elements of good character.

<p><b>As measures of progress, we will:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fulfill all the requirements to become a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) school by the spring of 2015.</li> <li>2. Earn a .5 additional point on the CCRPI for innovative practice.</li> <li>3. Review Love and Logic strategies with teachers and parents.</li> <li>4. Show a decrease in the number of office referrals as compared to the number generated in the academic year 2013-14.</li> </ol>
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**Summary of Strategic Initiatives:**

- Implement school-wide strategies designed to help students build character.
- Utilize the Character Committee to create and support activities which focus on developing strong positive character traits in students.
- Create opportunities to celebrate students who display attributes of a strong character.
- Incorporate additional behavioral support strategies in order to become a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) school. PBIS is a framework for assisting school staff in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. School staff will track data, implement a school-wide discipline plan, and train staff to utilize research-based strategies to create classroom environments that are conducive to learning.

**SECTION V: Next Steps**

The Ocee Elementary School administrative and leadership teams will monitor and support the strategic plan. Meetings will be held on a regular basis where team leaders will discuss focus areas and progress towards goals. All teachers will create and implement lessons and units designed to increase rigor and student engagement. The administrative team will conduct observations and review teacher lesson plans in order to provide feedback; teacher teams will take part in peer observations and share strategies and ideas. The administrative team will provide assistance in the area of data collection and analysis and schedule time for teachers to participate in routine data review. Students' academic progress will be shared with parents; information will be provided in addition to report cards and progress skills checklists. Activities will be planned and training will be scheduled to assist teachers and staff in creating more meaningful and positive relationships with and between students in an effort to help them develop good character traits.

The Ocee Elementary School Governance Council and PTA leadership will be routinely informed of progress on the strategic plan goals. Information about the plan will be disclosed to the school community in newsletters and other school communications. All stakeholders will be able to participate in activities designed to share information or solicit input. The strategic goals will be assessed and revised as needed over the course of the life of the plan.