



HOPEWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL

STRATEGIC PLAN SY 2015/16 – SY 2017/18

APPROVED AUGUST 2015

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 this 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 lead effectively 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.

Hopewell Middle School began the strategic planning process in the spring of 2015. 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 address them collectively. We pulled together a council of teachers and parents, both elected and appointed, all with the interest of making our school the best it could be.

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, & short-term goals; (4) the formulation of strategic initiatives; 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 Hopewell 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.

Hopewell 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, the leaders of Hopewell clarified performance trends and identified the school’s most critical areas for improvement.

Needs Assessment – Process

The needs assessment was compiled in three different ways: a collection of hard data (CCRPI, CRCT Scores, Student Growth Percentiles, Discipline data, and Mobility and Stability Data), parent and teacher AdvancED surveys, and two focus groups involving various stakeholders. Parents who are members of the HMS SGC held a community focus group and teachers seated on the council led a teacher/staff focus group.

The principal, Mr. LeMoyné, from the various sources listed above, collected the hard data. The AdvancED surveys went out electronically to the community and school and received a relatively high response rate.

The community focus group was open to all members of the community and asked key questions about diversity, communication, support, and educational opportunities.

The teacher focus group was selected from a balanced representation of teachers and staff and was more open in format, allowing teachers to state concerns and share ideas for ways to improve the school.

Needs Assessment – Summary of Findings

The SGC met to discuss the findings and share information from the focus groups. They found that there was a lot of common concern over some of the data (ELL and SWD scores, Science scores, and the overall achievement gap) as well as common scores on the surveys, showing a close viewpoint of both staff and community stakeholders.

Through the work of the SGC, the following findings were noted:

1. ELL students are performing below expectations on all tests
2. The achievement gap at HMS is noticeable with a distinct discrepancy between highest and lowest performing students
3. Students with disabilities are performing lower than average peers.
4. Students at HMS are struggling with performance in science across all grade levels

5. Parents would like to see STEM related Connection courses (robotics, hands on engineering, financing) with more relevant content tying current courses to high school courses.
6. Parents note personalized learning options need to be improved.
7. Teachers support strategic professional development provided by professional trainers.

These findings were subjected to the SUG (Seriousness, Urgency, Growth) method and each was assigned a rating of High, Medium, or Low. Overall ratings were averaged allowing the council to focus in on three to four areas of highest concern.

SECTION III. Long-term Outcomes

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 1. Improve student learning to maximize the academic potential for all students.

This long-term outcome was decided upon due to low scores in parts of the population (ELL and SWD), as well as a desire for all students to perform at their best. The SGC was particularly concerned about the achievement gap at HMS.

Measured through the CCRPI Report. Target is to increase CCRPI Achievement Gap Points to 15.

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 2. Maximize opportunities for students to develop and apply critical thinking skills.

This long-term outcome was determined by stakeholder desire for more advanced educational opportunities. Prime amongst these would be an increased focus on STEM-related activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Measured through Teacher Keys Surveys of Instructional Practice questions related to Academically Challenging Environment (5, 16, and 20). The school's Academically Challenging Environment average was 2.23/3 (District Average 2.25 and State 2.31). Target is to exceed district and state averages. Additional monitoring will be measured through a parent survey (baseline year).

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 3. Continually improve interpersonal relationships within our school community.

The long-term outcome was determined by stakeholder desire for improved relationships, understanding, and investment, at all levels of our school and community. Teachers, specifically, pointed out that there is a disconnect between different groups within the school and expressed frustration at a lack of skills to bridge that gap. This LTO will serve to help bring our school together and improve the climate across the board.

Measured through Teacher Keys Survey of Instructional Practice questions related to Positive Learning Environment (11, 12, 15). The school's Positive Learning Environment average was 2.37/3 (District Average 2.34 and State 2.4). Target is to exceed district and state averages. Additional monitoring will be measured through parent and teacher climate/culture survey (baseline year).

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

FOCUS AREA 1. Academic Achievement

The SGC noted a distinctive achievement gap at HMS. In addition, several sub-groups (ELL and SWD) have performed below expectations for consecutive years. The focus will be to improve the academic achievement of the populations of students performing below expectations and well as continue to foster adequate growth in the highest performing students.

As measures of progress, we will:

1. Increase achievement for students receiving special education services.
2. Increase achievement for students served through ELL.
3. Continue to foster growth for students meeting and exceeding standards.
4. Increase student accountability/responsibility for learning.

Summary of strategic initiatives:

- **Provide professional development on planning for co-teaching.**
- **Develop Tier II and Tier III behavior management system (PRIDE/PBIS)**
- **Develop standards-based assessments and improve re-teaching/reassessment strategies.**

FOCUS AREA 2. Effective Instructional Practices

The community stakeholders were vocal about looking for an increase in STEM-related opportunities within the school environment. In order for this to happen, instructional practices involving the application of critical thinking and problem solving need to be implemented.

As measures of progress, we will:

1. Increase student application of critical thinking and problem solving skills across all disciplines.
2. Increase application of strategies that encompass different learning styles.
3. Increase opportunities for students to participate in STEM-related activities.

Summary of strategic initiatives:

- **Form a group of teachers/staff to explore possible STEM-related activities.**
- **Enhance PLC process to meet the needs of all learners.**
- **Increase targeted professional development to address critical thinking and problem solving-skills.**

FOCUS AREA 3. Interpersonal Relationships

Although this focus area was not one of the original needs assessment findings, through discussion of various root causes of other areas (achievement gap, etc.), the SGC determined that there was a need to improve interpersonal relationships within the school. HMS has a diverse school community and focusing on the understanding of and relationships between all stakeholders would foster improvements in other areas of weakness.

As measures of progress, we will:
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase positive student/teacher/parent collaboration.2. Improve consistent communication methodologies.3. Continue to foster an understanding of our diverse school community. |
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Summary of strategic initiatives:

- **Increase target learning opportunities for teachers/staff.**
- **Transition to Google School as a platform for teacher/student/parent communication.**
- **Continue to foster positive student-to-student relationships through WEB (Peer Mentor Program).**

SECTION V. Next Steps

The SGC Chairperson and school principal will lead the strategic plan monitoring. These individuals will ensure the council is meeting and regularly to discuss the strategic plan. The members of the governance council will be responsible for monitoring specific strategic initiatives and reporting to the governance council on a regular basis.

The progress of the strategic plan shall be shared through open meetings and emails to stakeholders through the communication committee. The faculty will be introduced to the strategic plan at a school-wide faculty meeting. Monitoring of the plan will be communicated in the same fashion at grade level meetings or through email. Parent communication will take place via parent night events such as Curriculum Night and/or email communications.

This is a living document and shall be assessed in an ongoing manner in order to ensure targeted effectiveness. At each school governance council meeting, at least one strategic initiative will be discussed. All strategic initiative progress will be updated at the end of the school year.