



TAYLOR ROAD MIDDLE

STRATEGIC PLAN SY 2014/15 – SY 2016/17

APPROVED JULY 2014

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.

Taylor Road Middle 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. Our School Governance Council asset mapped with the help of the TRMS Leadership Team, a community focus group, and members of the SGC committee to answer the guiding questions. Taylor Road had previously completed three surveys with students, staff, and parents through our 2013-2014 examination of the Taylor Road Way. Additionally, The SGC used the ATLAS protocol to examine student testing, demographics, attendance, and discipline data provided by central administration. Finally, we revisited our School Quality Review from 2012 -- which guided prior TRMS' strategic plan goals.

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 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 **Taylor Road Middle 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.

Taylor Road Middle 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 **Taylor Road Middle School** clarified performance trends and identified the school’s most critical areas for improvement.

Needs Assessment – Process & Summary of Findings

Taylor Road’s School Governance Council, consisting of three teachers, one administrator, three parents, two community members, and the school principal, planning for the Needs Assessment using four components – grouped by external and internal environment.

- External Environment: Community Conditions
- External Environment: Stakeholders
- Internal Environment: Student Need
- Internal Environment: School Structure & Resource Use

External Environment: Community Conditions

As we considered External Environment: Community Conditions, we worked with the school Leadership Team and the Educational Resource Strategies (ERS) SchoolCheck asset map during the Spring of 2014. We reached out to our community with a focus group after school ended in May. We asked three guiding questions:

1. What societal issues most impact the school?
2. What external organizations are serving our students and how?
3. What current partnerships support our work? What stakeholders are missing?

The SGC listed property values, social media, the economy, and community pressure/competition (“keeping up with the Jones’”) as societal issues. We listed the numerous homework assistance options, sports leagues, faith-based organizations, music groups and the close connections (121 Reach) we share with our neighbor Chattahoochee High School. We celebrated the success of the Junior Achievement and Relay for Life partnerships mentioned during the focus group; we listed the missed opportunities of homeowners associations, assisted living centers, and the growing multicultural religious centers that are a part of the shifting demographics of our community.

External Environment: Stakeholders

We next examined External Environment: Stakeholders. Using the ATLAS data protocol, we examined perception data from numerous sources. We utilized existing data from three Taylor Road Way surveys (with students, parents, and staff) conducted during the 2013-2014 school year, along with the focus group discussion. The Leadership Team of TRMS noted results of the School Quality Review (2012-13) were also salient to answering three guiding questions:

1. Are students actively engaged in and taking ownership of their academic success?
2. How satisfied are our stakeholders with the programs and performance of our school?
3. What are the engagement levels of our parents and community members? In what activities are they most/least engaged?

This area brought into focus a huge growth opportunity: our students are engaged only in limited ways. The School Quality Review data had previously noted the need to raise the quality and regularity of student involvement in their own learning. Stakeholders reported high percentages of satisfaction with Taylor Road (98% parents and community members polled reported TRMS recognizes and values high achievement by students). Survey and discipline data show little concern regarding safety, as the vast majority of respondents reported students are safe at school. The council did note how compliant students are not always engaged students.

We noted ongoing efforts to increase connections to our external environment. The Summer Bridge initiative, our Flag Ceremony, and cooperative projects with Chattahoochee HS have all aided satisfaction levels. Yet the focus group and survey data points to a perception gap between parental involvement levels, students and parents feeling respected and heard by staff and administration, and the need for additional efforts with external stakeholders.

Internal Environment: Student Need

As we moved to consider Internal Environment: Student Need, our efforts began with a focus group of 6th graders. The SGC later used the ATLAS protocol to examine student data from the data pack of demographic data, mobility rates, student test scores from the Georgia Writing Test and the CRCT, as well as the surveys noted above. We again revisited our School Quality Review and prior strategic plans from 2012, plans which focused on the CRCT test data results. As the protocol concluded, we focused on these guiding questions:

1. In what areas do our students excel? In what subjects and grades do our students need additional support?
2. How does the performance of our school compare to that in other like schools?
3. Which specific student groups require additional support?
4. Are there specific components of our school culture that should be prioritized?

As a part of a 6th grade service learning project in social studies, four classes with approximately 90 students total discussed the Taylor Road Community by looking at our mission and belief statements. Students were asked to identify points from the mission and belief statement which they thought were most important, things that we do well, and parts that we need to work on. Their findings:

What are the important pieces of the mission and belief statements?

- We are members of a global society
- We believe all students can learn
- We are part of a team to help adolescents
- We have a safe and positive environment
- We have numerous opportunities for success
- We celebrate diversity
- We prepare students for the future

As part of the ATLAS protocol, members of the Council were tasked with considering the implications of the data. Many things are going well at Taylor Road. Our school climate, test scores and dedicated faculty and staff make our school a great place. We shared the perception from the survey data and anecdotally that TRMS is “happiest” middle school in Fulton County – the best kept secret of Johns Creek. Many teachers go above and beyond to support students, providing help sessions at all hours and giving up personal time. TRMS is very stable, with not a high mobility percentage. As such, we speculated mobility probably does not impact school outcomes. Taylor Road has a smaller population of Asian families as compared to neighboring River Trail Middle School. Test scores on the CRCT were certainly competitive with Fulton County and our local neighbors. Science classes certainly appeared to have the most growth potential initially. Our writing scores were also quite high.

The SGC also considered other implications. The fewer number of Taylor Road students exceeding standards as compared to our neighbors is concerning. Our gifted and struggling students appear to be getting adequate support; perhaps middle of the road students get lost. Assistance with homework outside of school is a “bonus” that not all students can receive. Activities and assignments could be more closely matched to student levels – especially those students of higher ability in general education classes. Higher level questions and assignments – more rigor – would extend and deepen student learning.

Survey results from the Taylor Road Way highlighted a disconnect between those who gave voice to concerns vs. those who chose not to respond. Overall, the results did point to teachers being more pleased with students than students with teachers, and that not all teachers are consistently respectful to students. The student group noted other growth opportunities for the SGC to consider:

- A lowering level of respect for
 - The school environment (kids leaving trash everywhere, vandalizing bathrooms, breaking/messing with school computers)
 - Students (bullying, cultural discrimination, even racism)
 - Teachers (negativity on both sides)
- The positive environment may be at risk. Students reported an atmosphere of negativity among students; although students report that most, but not all, staff promote a positive environment
- Some students do not feel a part of the “Taylor Road Community”
- Preparation for the future needs to include more innovative uses of technology

- More academically diverse activities needed (too many of the same activities in the classroom; no variety)
- Apathy among students. Some students do not care about their learning, which slows down the pacing for the rest of the class

Internal Environment: School Structure and Resource Use

The final component to our needs assessment process focused on the Internal Environment: School Structure and Resource Use. The School Governance Council used the SchoolCheck self-assessment tool as a measure of the opinions of our leadership team, grade level chairpersons, and content-specific contacts. We also compared those conclusions to the School Quality Review previously considered. Or guiding questions during this component included:

1. In what areas are we using resources strategically?
2. In what areas could we use our resources more strategically?
3. What areas should be prioritize for restructuring our resource use?

Highest scores on the self-assessment center around students with special needs. The data clearly showed special education and English language learners at Taylor Road are supported and integrated into the core learning environment whenever possible and at high levels. Here again the general education students and the perception of meeting their needs fell short. Scheduling and staffing to assist struggling students was a strength, with students given many opportunities during the school day to get additional instruction and practice. The School Quality Review noted the management of resources at Taylor Road allowed the school day to flow smoothly.

Needs were noted around struggling and new teachers, giving them deep and ongoing support. Teacher leaders and content contacts reported teachers struggle with accessing student data, and having the time to effectively analyze and use data in instruction. Administrators through the Teacher KEYS evaluation system have been positively perceived for their rollout of the process, although team members did note the need for leadership during planning and data team meetings.

SECTION III: Long-term Outcomes

This section should define the school's 3-5 Long-term Outcomes, and, for each Long-term Outcome, provide a brief rationale that explains the reason for prioritizing the Outcome. Additionally, each Long-term Outcome should have 1 or more associated measures and annual targets by which the success of the Outcome will be assessed.

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 1. [In no more than 1 sentence, state the Long-term Outcome here.]

[In 5-7 sentences, articulate the rationale and/or context for this Long-term Outcome.]

[List the 1 (or more) associated measures and annual targets for the Long-term Outcome.]

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 2. [In no more than 1 sentence, state the Long-term Outcome here.]

[In 5-7 sentences, articulate the rationale and/or context for this Long-term Outcome.]

[List the 1 (or more) associated measures and annual targets for the Long-term Outcome.]

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 3. [In no more than 1 sentence, state the Long-term Outcome here.]

[In 5-7 sentences, articulate the rationale and/or context for this Long-term Outcome.]

[List the 1 (or more) associated measures and annual targets for the Long-term Outcome.]

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 4. [In no more than 1 sentence, state the Long-term Outcome here.]

[In 5-7 sentences, articulate the rationale and/or context for this Long-term Outcome.]

[List the 1 (or more) associated measures and annual targets for the Long-term Outcome.]

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 5. [In no more than 1 sentence, state the Long-term Outcome here.]

[In 5-7 sentences, articulate the rationale and/or context for this Long-term Outcome.]

[List the 1 (or more) associated measures and annual targets for the Long-term Outcome.]

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

This section should define the school’s 3-5 Focus Areas. Within each Focus Area, list the associated Short-Term Goals along with measures of progress and targets. Additionally, for each Short-term goal, list the corresponding Strategic Initiatives.

FOCUS AREA 1.

[In 2-3 sentences, articulate the rationale and/or context for this Focus Area.]

<p>As measures of progress, we will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal] 2. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal] 3. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal] 4. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal]
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Summary of Strategic Initiatives:

- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]

FOCUS AREA 2.

[In 2-3 sentences, articulate the rationale and/or context for this Focus Area.]

<p>As measures of progress, we will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal] 2. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal] 3. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal] 4. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal]
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Summary of Strategic Initiatives:

- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]

FOCUS AREA 3.

[In 2-3 sentences, articulate the rationale and/or context for this Focus Area.]

<p>As measures of progress, we will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal]2. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal]3. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal]4. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal]

Summary of Strategic Initiatives:

- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]

FOCUS AREA 4.

[In 2-3 sentences, articulate the rationale and/or context for this Focus Area.]

<p>As measures of progress, we will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal]2. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal]3. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal]4. [insert specific short-term goal with associated measure, target, and the date by which you expect to reach the goal]

Summary of Strategic Initiatives:

- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]
- [insert list of Strategic Initiatives]

SECTION V: Next Steps

This section should be 1-3 paragraphs and should summarize the next steps of the strategic planning process.

This section should include information that addresses the following questions:

- *Who will lead and monitor the implementation of the strategic plan?*
- *How will the progress of the plan be shared and communicated?*
- *When will the plan be assessed and/or revisited?*

[Note that Initiative Action Plans and the Strategic Plan Monitoring Plan will be separate documents and should be attached to this narrative.]