

Candler County SACS Accreditation Progress Report

Develop opportunities for high-performance learners:

Partially met

One of our main focuses the past two years has been on Differentiated Instruction. Although training has occurred for all teachers the past two years we are not satisfied with our progress. We have regrouped and are now focusing on small-groups based on formative assessment. We believe the strategies mentioned above coupled with constructing multiple performance tasks will stimulate learning for our high performers. We are building the scholastic enrichment experiences through competitions for our high performing learners. We now have math competition in grades K-8. Georgia Southern University recently held a math contest for grades K-5. Out of the 18 possible awards we received seven (7) among the five (5) schools competing. While we are reasonably pleased in math competition K-8, we still are experiencing challenges with our high school math initiative. It is hoped that a newly adopted policy for tiered honor graduate status will increase student enrollment in more rigorous offerings of Pre-AP and AP. We do expect to expand scholastic competitions in science, social studies and literacy in 2009 – 10. Our educational foundation approved a request for advanced learners to attend a week long Academic Enrichment Camp at Georgia Southern University for the past two years.

Devise and implement an effective parent involvement program

Fully Met

All schools have active School Advisory Councils as of this date. Our Intermediate school now has a functional PTO. A PTO for the Metter Middle School is now in the planning stages.

All schools have specialized math and science parent nights, orientations, and advisement sessions. Parents are called via an automatic phone system about important school related activities. An email communication by MHS counseling team has proven to be an effective tool. We have employed a Parent Liaison Coach for our special-education population. The parent Special Ed Liaison Coach has logged numerous phone contacts, made home visits as well as numerous parent school visits. We had two (2) special parent events this year for exceptional children as well as for Hispanic families. We will begin in April 2009 conducting annual school climate surveys for the following constituent groups: students, parents and teachers. A parent university program has been made available via our Community In Schools link. Our Literacy Plan for 2009-10 will include a quarterly parent involvement component. Finally, a Gifted parent advisory board will be formed in 2009-10.

Expand and redesign the system's gifted program in order to identify and serve all eligible students

Partially met

We have employed a Gifted Coordinator to align the program of study for our Gifted learners. The coordinator with the help of the chief academic officer has created a committee consisting of representatives from each school that are gifted certified teachers. The committee has created a plan of action to coordinate curriculum and related academic experiences. The William and Mary curriculum has been adopted and it is partially implemented. We have increased our gifted population by 40% the past two years. The number of Gifted certified teachers has increased proportionally to our increase in student (s) population. While we are pleased with our progress, the need for alignment with

curriculum, instruction and assessment looms large. The input we have received from parents emphasizes the need for coordination with teachers other than the gifted specialist. We agree and have plans to stipend teachers this summer to align and compact curriculum in order to sustain learner stimulation. Moreover, we are requiring that all teachers build Differentiated Instruction into the teaching units in 2009 – 10. Finally, our Pre-AP and AP program will expand in 2009-10. We have the commitment from three (3) core teachers to attend an AP Institute. Again, alignment of core courses in grades 9-12 is a primary concern.

Develop a comprehensive district wide Literacy program that serves all students

Fully met

In the spring of 2007, our Better Seeking Team championed the vision for a district wide Literacy Plan. At the request of our Better Seeking Team the Superintendent recommended the employment of a Literacy Director. The newly employed Literacy Director surveyed, observed, interviewed and leaned on data to construct the Literacy Plan. The Literacy Plan is comprehensive to include diagnostic assessment, instructional training K-12, observation tools, Lexile scores, interventions, and quarterly reviews, etc. The Academic Coaches and building administrator leaders coordinated efforts to observe, coach and provide feedback on agreed-upon action steps. We have already identified how we will expand this Literacy initiative in year two. One example is we will be more specific in reference to the usage of before, during and after reading strategies in each lesson taught. The data is revealing greater levels of fluency and comprehension in grade levels 1-12. A specialized Literacy Program entitled “Read 180” has proven to be successful at Metter High and we are looking to expand this initiative in grades 6-8 in 2009-10. A gateway course is being taught prior to pre-planning for new teachers as well as those identified by principals needing assistance with proper framework for teaching content standards.

Develop a vertically aligned framework for student support that leads to a reduction in retention and an increase and high school completion

Partially Met

One of our belief statements stresses the need for a alignment in curriculum and instruction We have progressed to pre-arranged Tier 2 and 3 interventions. We are progress monitoring consistently in only one of four schools. We have made significant progress in the other three (3) schools with intervention time-frames. However, the probes to determine progress are inconsistent. We now administer benchmark assessments in all four schools, which enable us to provide small group content-based tutorials. We have contracted with a specialist to teach scaffolding strategies in inclusion classrooms. Our intervention specialist meets weekly with a school-based team in charge of tier 2 and 3 learning support. This has enabled the progress of aligned work. The intervention specialist will design and oversee transition of students between grade levels and between schools. Our retention rate based on state and local policies is approximately 25%, 27% and 20% in grades 3, 5 and 8 respectively. We believe the interventions employed this year will result in a 3 to 6% reduction in retentions this year. Our graduation rate has improved from 56.4 to 64.4%. We are anticipating a 70% graduation rate in 2009. We have considerable work to do to fully implement our standards-based grading policies in grades 1-8.

Update district technology resources and training

Met

We now have 60% of our classrooms equipped with 21st-century technology. Our technology division provides training for teachers who have a 21st-century technology installed in their classrooms. We will continue seeking funds for the remaining 40% of our classrooms to be equipped in the next few years. E-SLPOST funds are being utilized to accelerate equipping all classrooms with 21st Century Technology. A new server rack is needed to accommodate our growing number of interventions programs. Staffing to maintain our growing technology implements in classrooms will be a challenge.

Align the viable guaranteed curriculum across grade levels

Partially Met

We're still working on alignment and instructional agreements within our schools subject areas. However, recently our math and language arts teachers' grades 6-12 have collaboratively met in reference to textbook adoption and discussed and agreed upon instructional practices. It will now behoove us to closely monitor and support these agreements. Our professional learning communities are beginning to reflect on focused observations based upon instructional practice (s). The PLC's are presently working on designing and reflecting on the implementation benchmarks action steps. Our twin collaboration is more defined and focused on C-I-A. An example of this is the administration of common assessment for teachers that teach the same content. We will continue to work on mastery teaching and learning practices to include standards-based assessment. Instructional units are being revised to closely follow the demands of standards based classroom which includes more rigorous questions, assignments and assessments. In recent years, K-5 adoptions in reading and math have been agreed upon by teachers between the two elementary schools. The professional development for Literacy has been conducted in conjunction with both Elementary and Intermediate Schools. A standard based classroom rubric has been embraced by administrative leaders and teachers to self-assess and utilized to design professional development to reinforce common teaching of standards and assessments.