



Executive Summary

Morgan County High School

Morgan County Schools

Dr. Jim Malanowski, Principal
1231 College Drive
Madison, GA 30650

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Description of the School.....	2
School's Purpose.....	4
Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement.....	6
Additional Information	9

Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

 The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

Description of the School

Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?

Morgan County Charter High School (MCHS) is in its sixth year of a 10-year charter. Its charter is separate from the other three schools in the district, all of whom are part of a district charter in which they are in the third year of a five-year charter.

MCHS serves 987 students in grades 9 - 12 and is the only high school in a county of almost 18,000 residents. Geographically, Morgan County covers 347 square miles, and roughly half the school's students are bussed, sometimes from distant parts of the county. Up until the real estate crisis of a few years ago, Madison had a number of proposed and/or growing housing developments adding to the momentum of growth in the county.

Morgan County is mostly rural with several smaller communities from which it draws students. Sometimes 'small-town loyalties' and the relationships students develop while being transported to school serve to divide our students into cliques.

Located in Madison, a town of around 4,000 and the county seat of Morgan County, the school is surrounded by history and tradition. Often referred to as "the town that Sherman refused to burn", Madison has the second largest historic district in the state, and was named 'Best Little Small Town in America' in the 1990's. The high school campus was formerly a college campus and as a result is 'sprawling'. Some of the buildings date back to the 1920's while the gymnasium and Freshman Academy have opened within the past five years. The older facilities sometimes present a challenge since upkeep and maintenance demand district resources and personnel.

MCHS has a student body that is very diverse, in all respects. As an evolving bedroom community for Athens and Atlanta, a segment of our students come from upper- and middle-class families, and a significant segment of our students represent working class families, with many living below the poverty line. Over 43% are on Free and Reduced lunches, and while we qualify to be a Title I school, the district has chosen to utilize those funds for programs in the primary and elementary schools. Approximately 67% of students are Caucasian, 27% are African-American, and the remainder are Hispanic, "Mixed", or Asian students. In this regard, the school reflects the make-up of the broader community.

In addition, approximately 10% of MCHS students are served in some way by special education programs. The needs of gifted students are met through accelerated courses, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and an International Baccalaureate program, but all courses are open to any student in the school. For that reason, MCHS has seen relatively large numbers of students attempting advanced coursework, students who might not attempt such courses in other schools or in a different environment.

The staff of MCHS is, for the most part, mature and experienced. All certified staff is "Highly Qualified" with the majority holding advanced degrees. This combination of staff make-up, values and expectations of the community, and the quality of the professional staff make MCHS a desirable place to work as well as an attractive place for someone looking for a solid education for their children. As a result, staff turnover is minimal and some parents from surrounding counties are willing to pay tuition to send their children to MCHS.

The school had a significant change in leadership at the end of the 2011-2012 school year when the previous principal chose to leave to pursue other career opportunities. Concurrently, two assistant principals left the school, and while one came out of retirement part-time to

Executive Summary

Morgan County High School

assist in the transition, there was a void created by their absence. The cumulative 'history' that they carried about the various policies, procedures, and functions of the school and the historical perspective of decision-making has been missed.

In addition, funding issues in the district have affected budget considerations for programming and staffing. Early last spring, the principal was instructed to cut from \$240,000-270,000 from the high school budget for the current fiscal year. Most of the cuts were achievable through retirements and attrition, but some items that were cut were part of the culture. Students were, for the first time, told that they would be expected to pay testing costs for IB and AP courses. While the short-term effect seemed minimal, and enrollments in IB actually grew, this spring's testing cycle will tell a clearer story of the future of advanced programs at MCHS. In the past, all students were expected to take AP exams, and all students in the IB program sat for all the IB tests. Students are now being given the opportunity to take AP exams at a cost of \$89 per exam with students on Free and Reduced lunches receiving their first exam free and other exams costing them \$53 each. At the time of this writing, hard numbers are not available on the number of students who will be taking AP exams. In addition, after this year, senior students in the IB program will be expected to pay \$775 for the battery of IB exams. Community members have shown a willingness to support those students who would be unable to afford the costs associated with the IB program, but the extent of that support has not been tested.

Simultaneously, staff members have had 10 furlough days for the past two years, and other cuts have affected teaching supplies and materials. This has started to have an effect on staff morale. The long-term effect on morale and retention remains to be seen.

School's Purpose

Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

MCHS has a rich tradition of excellence and is dedicated to preparing all students for success. The mission of MCHS is to provide meaningful and diverse learning opportunities to prepare our students to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world as lifelong learners and contributing members of society.

We will be successful in our mission because we believe that:

All students can learn;

All students and teachers work together to create a safe and supportive environment;

Students' self-esteem is enhanced by recognition of student achievement and by positive relationships with staff;

Students, parents, teachers, administrators and community share responsibility for advancing the school's mission;

All students learn best when they are exposed to a variety of best practice instructional approaches;

All students have an opportunity to become good global citizens and contributing members of an international community; and

All students are special and deserving of personalized instructional consideration.

There is a theoretical framework that underlies all our work; this model is best characterized by the acronym KASH (Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, and Habits) (B.O. Little, 1921). When students leave MCHS, we hope that they possess the necessary tools to succeed in life. This includes the 'knowledge' that we can share through instruction, books, and other educational resources, but it also takes into account the 'value added' personal traits and character strengths that we model for them each day.

We also function from a set of foundation questions that we repeatedly ask ourselves:

What can I do to help?

How can I do this better next time?

How can I leave this place better than I found it?

We hope that this focus on a servant's heart, a quest for continuous improvement, and a sense of personal responsibility and legacy will benefit our students throughout life.

In their freshman year, students enter the Freshman Academy (as of this year, in a building of its own). In existence for the past ten years, it helps to ease the transition to high school.

A broad selection of courses and programs provide students with the opportunity to choose a college or career path that helps them prepare to pursue their life goals. As previously stated, gifted students are challenged through accelerated courses, AP courses, and IB courses. Starting in their freshman year, students can take accelerated math, English, and science curricula, as well as AP Human Geography. In the sophomore year, they can take two AP courses. In their junior and senior years, the AP offerings expand, especially in math and science, and some students choose to take the two-year IB program. Students can currently take fourteen AP courses during their high school career. MCHS also offers 10 vocational CTAE "Pathways" and students can participate in a Youth Apprenticeship Program and Work Based

Executive Summary

Morgan County High School

Learning.

In addition to the academics offered at MCHS, students have ample opportunity to connect with school and each other through a variety of non-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Once a month, over 40 clubs are offered during the school day. Students can also become involved in a broad spectrum of competitive athletic teams, Reading Bowl team, Academic Bowl team, FBLA, FFA, Robotics team, and various other highly competitive, highly successful teams and organizations. They can also be a part of our award-winning marching, symphonic, or jazz bands, AFJROTC, or other similar efforts. There are two major 'altruistic' efforts in which MCHS students are involved. One is "Shop with a Bulldog" (SWAB). SWAB involves teams of four students raising \$100 in order to 'adopt' a needy elementary student and accompany that student to Walmart for Christmas shopping for their family. This year, we had 63 teams of students participate in the project. The other major effort on the part of students is a student-led "One Morgan Olympics" field day for K-12 special needs students. MCHS students organize and carry out the event with minimal adult supervision.

There are two other student-led activities worth noting. In the winter, students put on a variety show called "It's Your Thing: Do What You Want to Do". Students can showcase their talents whatever they may be. Students rise to the leadership of the effort and develop the acts, market the performance, and carry it out. The show attracts a diverse group of students both as performers and audience members. In addition, each spring, students put on a concert called "One Morgan: The Concert". One Morgan: The Concert is more refined and is an outreach to the community. Again, students assume leadership roles and make it happen.

One final item that may help the reader understand 'who we are' better is the fact that this past fall our student body, faculty, teams, coaches, community and fans were recognized by the other schools in our region with the "Region Sportsmanship Award". The award is voted on by other teams and their coaches and awarded by the local electric cooperative.

All-in-all, it is safe to say that we value the 'whole' student and seek to develop him or her as a 'total package' while here. When the knowledge that students acquire at MCHS are mere burning embers in their minds, we hope that the ASHes (i.e. Attitudes, Skills, and Habits) that they have developed while here last forever.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.

Notable Honors and Achievements

Morgan County High School was again recognized as one of the "Most Challenging Schools in the United States" for 2013 by The Washington Post. MCHS has made the list the past several years. Last year, MCHS ranked 404th in the country and 22nd in Georgia in re the percentage of students attempting AP and IB tests.

This past fall, 5% of the MCHS student body was honored as AP Scholars, including 31 AP Scholars, 7 AP Scholars with Honor, 9 AP Scholars with Distinction, and 2 National AP Scholars.

82.8% of MCHS IB exams were 4 or better (better than the international pass rate of 78.3%).

18 students received IB diplomas.

In 2013, an MCHS student was named a National Merit finalist (8,300 finalists out of 1.5 million)

In 2012, MCHS scores were in the top 20% in Georgia on SATs

23 of 27 applicants were admitted to the University of Georgia last year (85%) while 5 of 5 applicants were admitted to Georgia Tech. MCHS has had three successive Presidential Scholars at Georgia Tech.

MCHS has had students attend Yale, Georgetown, Berklee, Belmont University, and various other prestigious institutions across the country. This year, a student received an appointment to West Point while others are pursuing admission to Princeton and Yale.

Students receive medals and cum laude on the National Latin Exam each year.

This year, 59 MCHS students attended Georgia Youth Assembly (GYA), a mock legislature of students from across Georgia and several MCHS students served in key leadership roles. MCHS students won 13 of 16 prestigious awards at GYA.

Two years ago, MCHS formed a Robotics Team that placed second in the Southeastern US in their first competition.

This year, the MCHS color guard finished 5th at the AFJROTC Georgia State Drill Team Competition.

Chief Robert Allwine was selected as the Outstanding AFJROTC Instructor.

The MCHS Band was invited to the Outback Bowl and parade/competition where they received Superior ratings; they also earned Superior ratings in other competitions. They received an invitation to travel to California next year for the Hollywood Christmas Parade.

Executive Summary

Morgan County High School

The 2013 Competition Cheerleaders were 9th in the state.

In 2011, a Morgan County team finished 7th in the state (out of 3,847 teams) in the Stock Market Game.

Two Morgan County High School students qualified for the international thespian competition.

A Morgan County Junior was 2nd in the state in vocal music competition.

One of our weight-lifters finished second in the state and another couple finished fourth.

Our chorus and symphonic band received all "Superiors" at the Large Group Performance Evaluation.

Our girls basketball team made it to the "Elite 8" in the state and our boys basketball team won the State AAA Championship.

Area of Improvement Over the Past Year:

As our evidence shows, our students have made improvements in most areas on End Of Course Tests (EOCT) over the past 3-year period.

Our district is working with Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) to create a performance culture within each school. MCHS has 12 teachers and administrators serving on a High Performance Professional Learning Community (HPPLC). This group will lead the effort to create a performance culture where data analysis and data driven instruction improve the way MCHS functions. The group is seeking solutions to address reading deficits in some students by focusing on a school-wide effort to ensure each teacher is implementing all the elements of a Standards Based Classroom.

Continual support of teachers as they roll out the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) is essential, and ongoing CCGPS training is at the forefront of PL initiatives. We are working with Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) consultants to implement on-going professional development over three years. Most school-based professional learning is conducted during Thursday Teacher Time (T3). This innovative use of time and personnel is a hallmark of MCHS.

MCHS utilizes a modified block schedule that allows teachers to provide 'extended' activities at least once a week. It also provides teachers a unique opportunity for professional learning during T3 each Thursday morning. Students have a late arrival time so teachers have an opportunity to work together for 75 minutes. The MCHS Leadership Team (comprised of department heads and other school leaders), along with administrators, collaborates to identify the professional learning activities for the T3 schedule.

MCHS's creative schedule is recognized throughout the region as a model of effective utilization of time and personnel.

Students have two enrichment periods each week. The Enrichment class is multifaceted and can be used as a time for students to receive remediation, credit recovery, extra tutoring, and a time to retake missed standards or review for standardized tests.

We are consistently examining data in an effort to ensure we are delivering instruction to meet student needs. We have multiple data sources and have begun to rely heavily on data available on the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) as a source of student data as well as Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data (used district wide).

Areas for Improvement

Executive Summary

Morgan County High School

60% of college freshmen from MCHS require remediation. Our best students are entering college prepared for the challenge, but our 'average' students need additional preparation to succeed.

MCHS did not make AYP for 2009, 2010, or 2011, primarily because of specific subgroup performance, and while that measure is no longer in effect, we continue to seek creative ways to close the gap between Economically Disadvantaged students, Students with Disabilities, and Black students and the rest of the student population.

We have a graduation rate of 85.6% overall, but only a 70% graduation rate for African-American students.

MAP data shows some students reading at a second grade level. We are working diligently to provide remediation and additional reading instruction for students with reading deficits.

While we are improving in most areas, our goal is for all MCHS students to succeed; our data shows that not all are succeeding. With the rigor of CCGPS, our teachers and students are challenged to perform at even higher levels to prepare for college and careers readiness. Our goal is to have them prepared.

Additional Information

Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.

One professional learning focus for 2013-14 is common formative assessment. A group of MCHS teachers were trained in 2012-13 and are redelivering their training. Teachers are working collaboratively to create meaningful formative assessments and using their results to inform classroom instruction. In addition the MAP data, which will be updated after the 3 assessments given each year, provides meaningful data for teachers in terms of progress and ongoing student needs.

The use of summative data has been a focus with HPPLC guiding the effort to become a performance culture. Data analysis has not been a focus at MCHS previously, but it is finally being utilized to assist teachers in understanding students' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers rely on summative data, including all standardized testing data available to them, and their own classroom summative assessments.

Another source of student data is Student Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). Teachers can access a student's entire testing history on SLDS. This provides the teacher insight into the student's academic history and is instrumental in determining appropriate differentiation in the classroom.

Our teachers participate in a minimum of 20 hours of school-based professional learning. MCHS's 2013-2014 professional learning plan focuses on providing teachers training and collaborative sessions to support implementation of the CCGPS / Literacy Standards and data analysis. Teachers are involved in a variety of training and collaborative sessions dedicated to preparing students and teachers to meet goals in these areas and improvement initiatives mentioned above. The plan addresses needs of all learners, including Special Education (SPED), English Language Learners (ELL), and gifted students; all teachers including CTAE, SPED, and Media Specialists participate in professional learning sessions.

Teachers at MCHS also participate in external professional learning (PL) sessions offered by our local RESA and other educational agencies and support programs. Teachers have already attended or are registered for almost 300 hours of PL outside MCHS, including Northeast Georgia RESA-sponsored learning communities. Teachers also participate in a variety of PL webinars, and several teachers are pursuing advanced degrees. Teachers do express a need and desire for training at school and are always eager to have more time that does not interrupt classroom instruction or interfere with planning periods for professional learning.