

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DESCRIPTION

Haralson County School District is a learning community of 500 professionals serving approximately 3,300 students in Pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Haralson County is a rural community with a population of approximately 29,533, located in the hills of Northwestern Georgia at the base of the "ABC Triangle," formed by the suburbs of Atlanta, Birmingham, and Chattanooga. The community places an emphasis on attracting new industry and fostering strong relationships between existing commerce, local government, and the school district. Haralson County is truly where location builds industry.

Dynamic industry and technology leaders, such as Honda Precision Parts of Georgia, Honda Lock- America, West Georgia Technical College, and Higgins General Hospital (Tanner Health System) currently support significant employment in Haralson County and are interested in supporting the district's efforts to build a solid local workforce with strong 21st Century Skills in the areas of technology, science, and math, as well as "soft" skills such as work ethic, social skills, and responsibility. Agriculture and lumber are two other significant industries in Haralson County looking for employees who have drive, initiative, and strong problem-solving skills.

Over the past five years, the Haralson County community has continued to rebuild following the economic difficulties of the early 2000s. Aside from a 12.1% spike in unemployment in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the unemployment rate has decreased from a 7.1% in July of 2016 to a current rate of 4.7% in December 2020. The school district is committed to working together with the community to improve this rate even further by providing viable and capable employees. In order to improve unemployment rates, we need to examine our community demographics as a whole. Although an unusually high percentage (21.7%) of people living in Haralson County (compared to 12.9% for Georgia) did not graduate from high school, this indicates an improvement from 26% in 2016. Fourteen percent (19.9%) of Haralson County citizens have a Bachelor's degree or higher (compared to Georgia's rate of 36.8%). The median household income for Haralson County citizens is \$46,353 compared to a Georgia median income of \$58,700. Haralson County School District is a high poverty district as evidenced by a free and reduced lunch rate of 70.9%. Demographically, our student population is made up of 90.46% White, 2.3% Black, 2.9% Hispanic, 3.8% Multiracial, and less than 1% from all other ethnicities, which closely mirrors the demographics of the community that is 91.1% White, 4.65% Black, 1.33% Hispanic, 1.46% Multiracial, and less than 2% from all other ethnicities. Approximately 17.5% are students with disabilities.

Haralson County School District has an enrollment of 3,270 students (Pre-K to 12th grade) and the school district has seven schools: two primary schools (PK-2); two elementary schools (3-5); a middle school (6-8); an alternative school (6-12) and a high school (9-12). Programs include:

Standards-Based Instruction (Pre-K to 12); STEM instruction (Pre-K to 12); Georgia Lottery Pre-kindergarten; School Wide Title I (K-12); Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) (PK-12); Career Tech and Agricultural Education (CTAE, 9- 12); Advanced Placement (9-12); dual enrollment(9-12); Southwire's 12 for Life; Work Based Learning (11-12), JROTC (9-12) and a 1-To-1 Chromebook initiative (3-12). Since our last AdvancED review, we have gone through both the strategic planning and the College and Career Academy grant processes to communicate with and include the voices of all our stakeholders in the teaching and learning process. The stakeholders revealed four priority areas for Haralson County students: a) to improve student achievement, b) increase rigorous academic opportunities to challenge all students, c) ensure smooth transitions from Pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade and beyond into post-secondary options and employment, and d) adopt a K-12 approach to increasing employability skills, including "soft" skills and technology. Our continuous improvement process allows all stakeholders to be included in creating a collective vision and focus for all students in Haralson County.

PURPOSE

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

The system's vision, "*Haralson County Schools will be recognized as a leader in improving student achievement for ALL students,*" demonstrates an on-going commitment to student achievement and academic excellence for all students through a continuous improvement process of collaboration with internal and external stakeholders who share accountability for a high-quality education.

The system's mission, "*Haralson County Schools will produce high-achieving students who will graduate and become productive and responsible citizens,*" ensures that our students will benefit from a commitment to a rigorous and well-rounded curriculum that will prepare them to compete in a global economy and improve the quality of life within their community, making it possible for graduates to secure a sustainable occupation wherever they so choose.

Haralson County's belief statements encompass our commitment to high expectations for all students and a committed community of learners and stakeholders working together for success in school and the community through continuous improvement:

- We believe all students deserve to be held to high expectations that reflect individual abilities.
- We believe every person deserves to be treated with respect.

- We believe the health, safety, and welfare of all students and employees are a prerequisite to student success.
- We believe students must be taught academic and life skills, including technology, to succeed in an ever-changing world.
- We believe school experience should be relevant practice for adulthood.
- We believe regular attendance is fundamental to learning.
- We believe all stakeholders share the responsibility for educating students.
- We believe effective communication is essential for all stakeholders.

In order to realize our vision and incorporate our beliefs into the daily work of Haralson County School District, we maintain our Charter System status. Being a Charter System allows for greater flexibility in serving students using state and local resources, greater community and parent involvement in decision making, and innovative and supportive solutions for students who may be falling behind or may need more acceleration. With this flexibility, Haralson County School District is able to provide a seamless schooling process that supports the wider community of Haralson County and greater accountability to the community in meeting our local outcomes. The framework for all continuous improvement efforts is highlighted in the four goal areas of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. These goal areas include: Student Achievement; Student Support; Student, Staff, Parent and Community Engagement; and Operational Support.

Additionally, measurable performance objectives are consistent between the district strategic plan and the school improvement plans. The district maintains a focus on preparing students to be college and career ready. This includes a rigorous focus on meeting Georgia curriculum standards and offering students a wide variety of learning opportunities, including fine arts, Advanced Placement, dual enrollment opportunities, honors and gifted classes, multiple career and technical offerings and our current project, the construction of our own College and Career Academy. Industry partnerships also enhance the application of standards to support students finding success beyond graduation.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school system's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school system is striving to achieve in the next three years. Haralson County School District's focus on continuous improvement is the foundation for our continued success in several areas of achievement. Our progress is driven by our Mission: Haralson County Schools will produce high-achieving students who will graduate and become productive and responsible citizens. A culture of success and high

expectations is sustained through a targeted and intensive focus on student achievement and support, teaching and learning, community engagement, and operational support.

Notable achievements for the Haralson County School District include, but are not limited to:

- 2020 Georgia School Boards Association Exemplary Board Status
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- 2016 Georgia School Boards Association Distinguished Board Status
- 2016-2020 System Accreditation (AdvancED)
- HCMS was designated as a 2020 Nationally Certified STEM Campus by the National Institute for STEM Education.
- Grace Keaton (2020) accepted to West Point Military Academy.
- Christina Gavazzi (2018) accepted to Harvard
- Mrs. Kathryn Shirey - Georgia Association for Career & Technical Education (GACTE) 2018 New Teacher of the Year.
- David Hitchcock was recognized by Superintendent Woods on 9-24-18 for excellence for being the Georgia CTI state president.
- STEM education has been implemented at all schools.
- Competitive robotics teams at all grade levels.
- Layla Wallace Selected for the 2021 Governor's Honors residential summer program in the area of Agricultural Research, Biotechnology, and Science.
- Maegan Rutherford 2019 NASA Museum of Aviation STEM TOTY
- 2020-2021: 2 HCMS Teachers Earned National Certifications for STEM Teaching
- 2019-2020: 5 HCMS Teachers Earned National Certifications for STEM Teaching
- 2019: Maegan Rutherford named Georgia STEM Teacher of the Year
- 2017: HCMS STEM Team - University of West Georgia STEM Competition Champions
- 2017: HCMS STEM Team - "Best Engineered Descent" - UWG STEM Competition
- HCMS Robotics 2017 West Georgia Regional 2018 Robot Design Award
- 2016 First Lego League Georgia Teacher of the Year-Debbie Huckeba - HCMS
- HCMS Robotics 2017 Super Regional Grand Champions
- HCMS - 2019 National Yearbook Program of Excellence
- 2017 Georgia Middle School Association Educator of the Year Runner-up-Malena Rice
- 2016 Georgia Middle School Association Team of the Year-HCMS Team 6-1
- March 2020: HCMS earned EPACT certification award for meeting the guidelines of the United States Energy Policy Act for Enhanced Energy Efficiency and Power Usage.
- HCMS named Governor's Office of Student Achievement-Beat the Odds School - 2018, 2017, & 2016
- HCMS 5 Stars School Climate Rating - 2019 & 2018
- BES Implements HC WATCH Program 2017

- BPS named a 2018 Beating the Odds School by the GaDOE
- TPS Five Star Climate Rating 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, & 2020
- HCSD PBIS Designations FY16 – FY20
- 15-16: Emerging: WHES, BPS, BES, HCHS, Operational: HCMS & TPS
- 16-17: Emerging: WHES, BPS, BES, HCHS, Operational: HCMS & TPS
- 17-18: Operational: All HCSD Schools
- 18-19: Operational: WHES, BPS, BES, HCHS, Distinguished: HCMS & TPS.
- 19-20: *All schools in the state practicing PBIS were designated "PBIS Schools" because of the early closure of all schools on 3/13/20 and no opportunity to submit summative data and reports.*
- Willowbrooke at Tanner Medical partnership to provide counseling services
- District Wide CEP Grant (Free breakfast and lunch for ALL students) FY19-FY21
- Various state and regional recognitions for high school athletics, fine arts and Skills USA (CTAE skills).

Our students and staff regularly receive a wide variety of recognitions. School-level achievements are highlighted on the individual schools' websites and featured on social media. Those who have earned regional, state, or national recognition are spotlighted during the regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings, and pictures from the presentation are shared on the district website and social media.

Georgia utilizes student achievement performance on the Milestones End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) test to inform the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) used for school accountability purposes. When many of Georgia's schools shut down during the COVID-19 crisis, Georgia waived state testing requirements for the Spring of 2020. Consequently, no CCRPI scores were calculated for the 2019-2020 school year. As of the writing of this narrative, Georgia has administered EOC testing for the Fall semester and plans to administer both EOC and EOG Milestones in the Spring. However, waivers requesting forbearance from both state testing and accountability for the 2020-2021 school year have been submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

The absence of student achievement data from the 2019-2020 school year has complicated the longitudinal evaluation of instructional improvements. District and school leaders are utilizing multiple formative and summative progress monitoring tools to evaluate student progress in lieu of state testing data. Some notable academic gains are listed below.

- Biology EOC performance grew from 66.2% at the developing level and above in FY16 to 90.8% in FY19.
- 9th Grade Literature EOC performance grew from 71.7% at the developing level and above in FY16 to 80% in FY19 (The FY19 data included 8th graders enrolled in 9th Grade Lit.).

- Geometry EOC performance grew from 68% at the developing level and above in FY16 to 89.4% in FY19.
- 9th Grade Literature EOC performance for SWDs grew from 21.1% at the developing level and above in FY16 to 44.2% in FY19.
- Algebra I EOC performance for SWDs grew from 12.5% at the developing level and above in FY16 to 39.5% in FY19.
- 5th Grade Math EOG performance grew from 67.1% at the developing level and above in FY16 to 79.7% in FY19.
- 8th Grade Math EOG performance grew from 78% at the developing level and above in FY16 to 91.4% in FY19.

One of our proudest achievements has been our increases in our high school graduation rate. The 2016 four-year graduation rate for Haralson County High School was 80.8%. Our improvement and engagement efforts have resulted in astronomical graduation rate increases over the last five years. The four-year graduation rate for HCHS in 2017 jumped to 93.16% and again in 2018 to 94.25%. We have remained above 98% in 2019 and 2020 with four-year cohort graduation rates of 98.6% and 98.1% respectively.

Challenges

We continue to strive to have high achievement in all content areas and provide targeted and intensive instruction for all students to ensure their success in K-12 education and beyond into college and career settings. While we are above the state in many achievement areas, we still have room for improvement in others, particularly literacy. Our district literacy plan was devised specifically to address the literacy deficiency with a comprehensive, research-based and data-driven K-12 approach. In all other disciplines, we have implemented data structures through a continuous improvement process that facilitates the examination of our instructional practices in an effort to implement research-based strategies based on current student performance.

Technology integration and digital learning are ways to reach all students and truly individualize their learning. Technology is a fast moving trend. Although our commitment to ensuring that all students have full access to technology at all times places us ahead of the curve in comparison to many districts, keeping up with advancing software and hardware requirements is a challenge. Currently we have expanded our 1:1 Chromebook initiative in grades 2 through 12 with extensive access to Chromebooks, iPads and other technology in Pre-K through 1st grade. These devices make it possible for us to easily launch and utilize diagnostic software, progress monitoring apps, instructional programs and assessment platforms. We are fully immersed in the Google environment, including Gmail, Google Apps for Education, and Google Classrooms to truly individualize each student's educational experience.