

North Hart Elementary School

Executive Summary

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North Hart Elementary is a Title I public school located in rural northeast Georgia, in the town of Bowersville, in Hart County. Hart County is situated on the Georgia/South Carolina state line and is nestled next to Lake Hartwell and the Hartwell Dam, which provides hydroelectric power to the surrounding areas. As of 2020, Hart County has a population of 26,785 with a growth rate of 1.30%. Hart County Charter Schools consists of 5 schools: one high school, one middle school, and three elementary schools. The system has an approximate 32 million dollar operating budget and serves as the largest employer in Hart County. North Hart was established in 2002, as a consolidation of two schools, Airline Elementary and Mount Olivet Elementary, which were closed upon completion of North Hart Elementary. North Hart serves approximately 650 students in Pre-K through fifth grade. The student body of North Hart Elementary is comprised of white, black, two or more races, Hispanic, and Asian ethnicities, with white being the majority. In 2020, there are 653 students enrolled in Pre-K through 5th grade, with a population of 75% White, 8.6% Black, 9.8% Hispanic, 6.1% Two or more races, and 0.5% Asian/Pacific Islander. North Hart's faculty and staff consists of 46 teachers, 17 support staff, 1 Registered Nurse, 1 Media Specialist, 2 Administrators, and 1 Counselor. North Hart qualifies for Title I Assistance with over 58% of its students qualifying for free or reduced meals. North Hart also serves a population of EL students and migrant families. We have taken into account the needs of our diverse families by using home language survey responses from enrollment to develop communication strategies that support these language needs as we communicate with parents and guardians in their home language for school-wide information, student progress meetings, and daily communication when necessary. Migrant students are provided additional instruction during the summer

in order to support learning. This services is provided for students across the county and is housed at North Hart. Migrant students are provided all services for which they qualify, which includes academic tutoring.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the most current standardized testing information available includes Spring 2019 GMAS, 2019 CCRPI, 2020 ACCESS, Fall 2020 MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), as well as common assessments administered upon return to school for the 2020-2021 school year. This data is used to identify areas of strength, weakness, trends in performance, and academic gaps. CCRPI data from 2019 is the most current and is used to identify areas of strength and weakness. The 2019 CCRPI score for North Hart Elementary is 79.1.

The faculty and staff of North Hart continuously prepare and plan for increasing student performance. This process includes analysis of the most current assessment data, Next Step Guided Reading assessments, MAP, common assessments, formative instructional practices, horizontal and vertical team planning, and participation in Achievement Teams to include data-driven instructional practices. Professional learning focuses on enhancing comprehensibility of content areas, effective use of student performance data, strategies for effective instruction, and other areas of concern based on needs-assessment surveys completed by teachers.

North Hart is fortunate to have a highly active and effective PTO, which is responsible for many successful fundraising and community-building activities throughout the year. The annual Spring Fling and Color Run have become staple events for our school and community. Additionally, NHES PTO provides two scholarships to graduating seniors who completed fifth grade at HES. This scholarship is in memory of Kathy Ford Martin, a paraprofessional who dedicated her career to students of North Hart.

School's Purpose

As part of Hart County Charter Schools, it is essential that North Hart, as well as the other schools, focus on following the system's purpose. Through the work of HCCS System, School Governance Teams and collaboration with faculty and staff members, the vision, mission, and guiding principles/beliefs were updated in order to closely align with those of the system.

The mission of North Hart Elementary is to prepare all students to meet tomorrow's challenges by providing quality educational opportunities today. At North Hart, students are provided with rigorous content area classes that are aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence and instructional strategies that meet the individual needs of each student. Students participate in school-wide enrichment programs that target individual student interests, as well as the 17 Career Pathways for Georgia. It is the vision of North Hart Elementary, as well as Hart County Charter Schools, to be recognized for educational excellence. We believe that, in order to achieve our mission and vision, we must provide a school that is safe, secure, and nurturing for all. We believe that stakeholders promote a positive atmosphere that fosters confidence and self-worth for all. We also believe that each individual is valued, treated with respect, and has the right to be educated and the responsibility to learn.

In order to address early learning concerns, Hart County Charter Schools has developed a "jumpstart" program for our youngest at-risk learners. Based on readiness scores, students are prioritized and selected for participation in the "Bridge to Beginnings" program for rising Kindergarteners, which addresses literacy, math, and social skills. Additionally, rising first graders are selected to participate in a math-based "Bridge to Beginnings" program. These programs provide 10 half-days of instruction prior to the start of the school year. This provides a small-group setting, since the teacher to student ratio is 10:1 and each class has a paraprofessional to support instruction. The instruction is focused on necessary skills that students need to start the school year in a productive manner, including letter and number identification and early literacy skills. For the rising first graders, math is the focus since it was determined through data analysis that math literacy has become a deficit for early learners. The Bridge to Beginning program is provided at all HCCS elementary schools.

As a faculty, we maintain high expectations for everyone in the school, both academically and behaviorally. We build strong lines of communication between the faculty, students, parents, and community through daily communication efforts, parental involvement activities, social media and website updates, and PTO events.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

NHES continues to show improvement on CCRPI, with increasing scores each year since recalculation. The most recent CCRPI rating occurred in 2019. NHES earned an overall score of 79.1, which was an increase of 5.2 points from 2018 CCRPI. Additional highlights and areas for growth are listed below.

NHES 2019 CCRPI

- Earned 8 green flags with stars (met or exceeded 6% growth) and 10 green flags (met or exceeded 3%)
- English Learners demonstrated significant growth in ELA with a content mastery score of 73.34 (target score of 46.22)
- Students with Disabilities exceeded 6% growth in all content areas
- Economically Disadvantaged performed well, earning green flags with stars in ELA and Math and a green flag in Science, though they earned a yellow flag in Social Studies

Areas for Growth

- Received 3 yellow flags (growth less than 3%) and 3 red flags (no growth)
- Black subgroup earned red flags in both ELA and Math
- Continued emphasis on reaching all students, as well as collaboration and support of instructional coach will be utilized to help increase achievement in these areas

Climate Rating

NHES saw a significant decrease in the Climate Star Rating, with a drop from 5 stars to 2 stars. This is not indicative of the climate and culture that we have built and maintained at North Hart. This measure is a reflection of administrative error in the survey process.

Student surveys show an increase of 2.8% and parent surveys remained within one-half percentage point from the 2018-2019 school year results. The lack of personnel survey data caused the drop in the

rating. Without this error, we feel our rating would be commensurate with the 2018 Climate Rating. The error has been addressed and safeguards have been put in place to ensure the process is completed in its entirety.

North Hart Elementary was named a Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence Beacon School in 2016. The following year, NHES was named a Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence Lighthouse School. BRSE's Lighthouse School Awards is a recognition program that includes four award levels: Aspiring School, Points of Light School, Blue Ribbon Beacon School, and Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School, the highest recognition. Awards levels are based on criteria from the organization's Blueprint for Excellence. The Blueprint for Excellence is a comprehensive school assessment process that measures the quality of academic and instructional programs. The assessment covers nine major categories of critical performance elements found in excellent schools and allows a school's own stakeholders to assess the school's performance and design program improvement initiatives that focus on results of the assessment. Blueprint of Excellence assessment is based on the following nine categories: Student Focus and Support; School Organization and Culture; Challenging Standards and Curriculum; Active Teaching and Learning; Technology Integration; Professional Community; Leadership and Educational Vitality; School, Family, and Community Partnerships; and Indicators of Success.

As part of the review, the committee was impressed by the integration of 7 Mindsets philosophy in the work that is done at NHES. The "Passion First" mindset is exemplified in our Club Days. Teachers design and facilitate club day offerings based on their own personal passions and hobbies. Students choose club offerings based on their own interests, supporting the mindset of "Passion First." Club Day also allows a time for our community members to interact and support our students, as they also serve as Club Day leaders. Over the last decade, Club Day has developed into one of the unique qualities of NHES and has spread to the other two elementary schools.

STEAM instruction has been a focus for Hart County Schools. Eight years ago, elementary schools started this initiative with STEM facilitators to help build fundamental understandings and a foundation for STEM instruction at the middle and high school levels. The approach to STEAM instruction has evolved to include many teachers within the school. Teachers from all HCCS participate in the locally-developed STEAM Academy, which includes professional learning in the areas of best practices and project/problem based learning. As of 2020-2021 school year, we have 10 teachers who have participated in prior years, as well as 4 teachers who are currently participating.

In 2018, North Hart Elementary representatives attended GLISI (Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement). In prior years, administrators attended GLISI with a system approach to determining areas of focus. This team used those areas and identified areas of focus specifically for North Hart. It was determined that collaboration was a significant issue in the advancement of NHES. As a result, the team implemented various strategies and approaches learned at GLISI to help other faculty and staff members diagnose the internal issues. Unsurprisingly, the faculty and staff members also came to the conclusion that the lack of effective collaboration impeded growth for the school. As a result, the school has implemented the following strategies to improve collaboration, starting with administration:

- Be more visible in classrooms to promote a better sense of collaboration and cohesiveness
- Implemented protected planning time through “Team Tuesdays” which allow administration to support horizontal team planning and achievement teams.
- Micro-teaching reflections and peer feedback to allow teacher-to-teacher learning and support
- HCCS Professional Learning structure promotes collaboration among teachers at all schools in areas of specific focus
- School-based Professional Learning with support from district Instructional Coaches to help teachers rekindle the “why” and the purpose behind the work they do daily

