



SHAKERAG ELEMENTARY

STRATEGIC PLAN SY 2016/17 – SY 2019/20

APPROVED JUNE 2016



SECTION I. Strategic Planning Background and Approach

Shakerag Elementary began the strategic planning process in the spring of 2016. In order to plan our strategic direction, we first engaged with our community to understand our specific strengths and challenges. We developed a plan and identified needs to address them collectively. Our school leadership team and our School Governance Council worked collaboratively to reassess and reevaluate our progress regarding the original three long-term outcomes in terms of our community perception, academic achievement and instructional programs in order to look towards where we aspire to be in the future.

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 initiatives; 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 **Shakerag Elementary** 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 involves a thorough consideration of the following questions: Why is reflecting on our practices, processes, and perceptions critical to achieve our long-term outcomes? How will we address the root causes identified in our needs assessment? How will we know we are moving in the right direction? What will we do differently? 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.

Shakerag Elementary 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, the leaders of **Shakerag Elementary** reflected on progress toward 2012-2016 strategic plan long-term outcomes, clarified performance trends and identified the school’s most critical areas for improvement.

Progress toward 2012-2016 Strategic Plan Long-Term Outcomes

Long-Term Outcome 1	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Current Data
(Note that this data reflects grade level to grade level comparisons, not student cohort groups)	CRCT grades 3-5 (Spring 2014) (% Exceeding)	Spring 2012		Spring 2014
	3 rd Reading	83%		82%
	FCS	57%		55%
	State	47%		46%
	3 rd ELA	81%		72%
	FCS	49%		44%
	State	38%		32%
	3 rd Math	89%		86%
	FCS	54%		53%
	State	44%		44%
	3 rd Science	84%		75%
	FCS	49%		44%
	State	39%		36%
	3 rd Social Studies	79%		78%
	FCS	37%		43%
	State	28%		36%
4 th Reading	83%		79%	
FCS	54%		59%	
State	44%		52%	

	4 th ELA	73%		68%
	FCS	46%		45%
	State	35%		35%
	4 th Math	80%		80%
	FCS	46%		48%
	State	36%		39%
	4 th Science	82%		77%
	FCS	53%		49%
	State	43%		43%
	4 th Social Studies	68%		58%
	FCS	30%		34%
	State	24%		30%
	5 th Reading	67%		83%
	FCS	42%		52%
	State	32%		42%
	5 th ELA	74%		75%
	FCS	51%		50%
	State	41%		39%
	5 th Math	70%		84%
	FCS	46%		56%
	State	37%		44%
	5 th Science	78%		82%
	FCS	49%		50%
	State	41%		42%
	5 th Social Studies	62%		66%
	FCS	30%		34%
	State	24%		27%
	ITBS grades 3,5			
	Mean National Percentile			
	(National Average is 50)			
		Fall 2012		Fall 2015
	3 rd Reading	82		83
	FCS	66		62
	3 rd Math	91		92
	FCS	75		68
	5 th Reading	84		83
	FCS	63		60
	5 th Math	91		88
	FCS	71		65

Overall, students at Shakerag are showing growth in academics across the board. They consistently perform competitively with other area schools (NELC) and exceed benchmarks as compared to the district and state. Student achievement is an obvious and essential long-term outcome for Shakerag. The triangulation of our recent ITBS, Georgia Milestones, and Write Score results have provided baselines to guide our focus. Shakerag has strived to create a learning model that provides more personalization in our instruction to increase this achievement. Currently all classrooms have begun to incorporate the workshop model in reading, writing and math. Through vertically aligning Humanities and STEM teams, we have increased writing opportunities across content areas. All classrooms are using Units of Study by Lucy Calkins and Good Habits, Great Readers, both researched-based approaches that support student achievement across the county. Our classroom environments and instructional plans follow a Balanced Literacy approach using guided reading and the CAFÉ models as guides. We have a daily Intervention and Enrichment time where students work to increase and challenge their academic achievement. We are beginning to use technology to make it more personalized. Our staff has participated in the TAG certification process with 23 teachers being eligible for TAG Endorsement by the end of the 2015-16 school year.

Through our study of ITBS and Georgia Milestone scores, we continue to find ways to improve instruction. Additionally, the recent narrative data results for Georgia Milestones is important to note. Although we have begun to increase the use of technology to advance student achievement, teachers and students still need substantial and consistent support in developing mastery in using programs that align to our goals. Our instructional support teacher, provided by seed funds, has been essential in helping teachers and students become more proficient in technology and personalized learning. Using the data from the implementation of these online programs has been essential in driving instruction in our general education classrooms and Intervention/Enrichment (I/E) blocks. Supporting our teachers in their learning and growth plays a vital role in our continued success with the implementation of instructional best practices.

Long-Term Outcome 2	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Current Data
Develop Student Communication Skills	5 th Grade GA Writing (% Exceeding)	2012 32%		2014 43%
	FCS State	20% 11%		20% 13%
	# of students instructed in a foreign language	0		2016 22.9 Average Number per week October 2015 – April 2016

In the past three years, we have integrated writing across the curriculum that requires students to put their thought processes on paper. We have started routinely using data driven personalized conferences between students and teachers. We have also begun implementing student-led conferences with parents and peers. This requires students to articulate their learning using supporting data and establish upcoming goals. These conferences also allow students to take ownership of their learning.

This past year we have developed 15 Shakerag Essentials, which drives the communication skills, gives ownership for actions, and teaches good citizenship. Students were also given the opportunity to enrich their learning through project-based learning and technology presentations. We have started many student led clubs, which enhance student communication skills. They include: Student Market, Morning Show Broadcast, The Shark Wave Newspaper, Destination Imagination, Robotics, Patriotic Club, Critics Corner, Tech Squad, Destination Imagination and Math/Science Olympiad. Students were also asked to lead new parents and prospective students on newcomer tours. We have also welcomed several groups of educators into our classrooms where students were able to articulate their learning experiences. These learning groups have included the NELC, Leadership Johns Creek, Ed Elements, and teachers and administration from other Fulton County schools. Other student led events include Leadership Day, where we welcome visitors from the community into our classrooms, and Super Shark Assemblies where students recognize and celebrate peers who have exemplified the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Each week in our Advanced Strategies Lab, students design, develop, engineer, and share projects with the guided support of a dedicated teacher. We've decided that this indicator is vital to the future success of our school because of the following challenges we still face:

- Maintaining and expanding school-wide expectations and leadership development
- Improving our students writing abilities in preparation of Georgia Milestones
- Allowing ALL students the opportunity to develop their communication skills

Long-Term Outcome 3	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Current Data
Fosters Student Leadership	% of students participating in Student-Led Conferences	0%		100% Grades 3-5

On a daily basis, Shakerag students are provided opportunities to develop their capacity as young leaders. Student clubs and markets created by students (and facilitated by adults) are helping students grow in their ability to develop healthy relationships, understand how to resolve conflicts, advocate for themselves and showcase their leadership potential around our school's campus. It is critical this trend continues and students are afforded the opportunity to be 'forward thinkers', self-advocates and team players. Our Leader in Me program and the ubiquitous nature of the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People have begun to set the stage for our students and their futures as leaders. "Celebrating Learning. Inspiring Leaders." The rationale for student leadership as a long-term outcome is our strong belief that we can teach and nurture leadership skills that will become life-long tools for success in the real world. Beginning in 2011 we adopted a comprehensive leadership initiative through Steven Covey's Leader in Me program. Using the 7 Habits framework as well as the Shakerag Essentials, the following leadership opportunities have been developed and fostered: Student Lighthouse Team, Leadership Day, Leadership Notebooks, student-led conferences, student greeters, school tour guides, and speakers at school assemblies. 100% of our students participate in learning and practicing leadership skills and roles. Additional leadership opportunities include Student Market, Patriotic Club, Science and Math Olympiads, Destination Imagination, Tech Squad, Economics Day, RoboSharks, live Broadcast crew, Critics Corner, front office work and school-wide service projects. Our challenge is to continue to develop responsible leaders who take responsibility for their own learning and are productive members of their community.

Needs Assessment – Process

For every school, the strategic planning process begins with a thorough consideration of the questions “Where are we as a school?” By identifying strengths and weaknesses within the school and examining opportunities and threats 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.

We began the strategic planning process by designing and conducting an Environmental Scan. Through the scan process, 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.

Following the environmental scan, the planning process continued with an in-depth Organizational Assessment. By analyzing a comprehensive set of school data and reviewing school-based surveys and external school reviews, our leaders clarified performance trends and identified the school’s most critical areas for improvement.

I. Environmental Scan – Process & Summary of Findings

Our School Governance Council worked to create an environmental assessment designed to capture the stakeholder perceptions of the Shakerag community. Working together, our Council created a survey targeting all Shakerag homeowners – everyone within our attendance zone who pays property taxes that fund our total school program. We wanted to capture the perceptions of all Shakerag residents, regardless of whether or not they have children attending our school.

We designed our survey to capture overall perceptions in the following areas: communication, personnel, educational achievement and community involvement. We utilized both rating systems (1-10 scales) and priority listings with open-choice responses available for comments. We targeted all active and emerging neighborhoods, engaging all homeowner associations, neighborhood websites, newsletters and direct mail to solicit as many responses to our survey as possible within a 60-day window. We collected survey data from May 2013 through July 2013 and received approximately 150 independent responses (approximately 6% of total residences in Shakerag attendance zone) that included numerous comments/suggestions as part of their completed survey.

In summary, our Environmental Scan indicates a strong community perception of Shakerag, with most respondents (71%) rating Shakerag as a “9” or “10” on a 10-point scale (1 being lowest, 10 being highest). In fact, the lowest rating was a “6”, made by one resident. All others (99.3%) rated Shakerag a “7” or higher on this 10-point scale. Further, respondents indicated they are very satisfied with our leadership initiative, school personnel and amount of community involvement. While overall extremely positive and favorable towards our total school program, we also found areas of growth, including improving communication and school outreach as well as looking into ways to provide foreign language opportunities for our students.

Over the last three years our School Governance Council has helped look for ways to communicate more effectively with our stakeholders, and has ensured school administration and our PTA Executive Board are aware of the community perceptions brought forth by our Environmental Scan. Facebook, Twitter, School Messengers,

weekly newsletters and websites (local school, classroom, PTA and SGC) are being utilized to help provide timely communication.

II. Organizational Needs Assessment (Process) & Summary of Findings

Our school administration and leadership team, comprised of Principal, Assistant Principal, Curriculum Support Teacher, counselor, K-5 Grade Chairs and Special Area Team leaders, gathered, assessed and evaluated our school data for our Organizational Assessment. We looked at current and recent performance results (last 3 years) from the following assessment/school-wide reports: CRCT, ITBS, GA 5th Grade Writing Assessment, ESOL/IRR data, student attendance summary, student demographic summary and prior independent school reviews (GAPSS Analysis 2011/12, SQR Review 2012/13).

As a team, we reviewed data and compared results, as appropriate to our state, district and local peer school groups. CRCT data, Georgia Milestones, STAR data, and ITBS were reviewed against all other Fulton County Schools. We noted that standardized data collected yearly; each testing group is comprised of a different set of students so any increase/decrease from one year to the next should be considered with this in mind.

Overall, the data continues to present a very strong academic program at Shakerag. Students perform consistently at the top of our district in nearly every tested grade/subject. Further, our students perform statistically well above the national average on the ITBS with a mean national percentile of 83 or higher in Reading and 88 in Math (the national average is “50” as the ITBS is a norm-referenced test). In our School Quality Review (2012), Shakerag was rated as “Distinguished” for our Academic Performance and School Culture & Personal Development – the highest rating possible for any school. This SQR also rated Shakerag as “Accomplished” in all four remaining measures (Learning and Teaching, Leadership & Management, Curriculum, Community Involvement). Specific recommendations for improvement were made in the areas of Writing, Data Analysis and Technology Utilization.

Our school is demographically diverse, having just under 800 students (792) whose families come from all over the world. (Approximately 40% Indian, 8% Korean, 11% Chinese, 5% Japanese/Taiwanese/Vietnamese, 26% Caucasian, 10% African-American.) Approximately 7% of our students qualify as English Language Learners (ELL), 37% of our students qualify for Fulton County’s Talented and Gifted (TAG) program, and 7% qualify for Special Education services (Speech and/or IRR services). Currently, approximately 7% of our students qualify for free or reduced meal status.

In looking at all the data, we did not identify any significant school-wide deficiencies or weaknesses in our academic performance data. As a school team, however, it is important to us that we continue to focus on our students’ academic achievement, primarily by looking at the effectiveness of our teachers’ Instructional Strategies and Academically Challenging Environment ratings (standards 3, and 8 from our Georgia TKES evaluation instrument).

As a team, (in 2013 and currently) we have identified areas to target for continuous improvement, specifically looking at our aggregate writing performance. While our scores increased significantly in 2013 to meet or exceed our peers, our overall performance is not yet consistently at this high level. We want to continue to increase our students’ critical thinking abilities (project/problem-based learning). In addition, we continue to look at and reflect on improving instructional effectiveness of all teaching staff (peer observations, NELC, Ed

Elements, learning walks). We want to continue to improve our academic performance in all subject areas, further increasing the amount of students who “Exceed” standards (or are “Distinguished” on the Georgia Milestones).

In addition to looking for ways to improve our teacher instruction and providing an appropriately challenging environment for our students, we want to continue to develop the leadership capacity in our students and help them become self-advocates. While school events and opportunities have increased since 2013, we believe it is critical that this trend continues so we can support the development of student communication skills and continue to grow our young leaders.

Needs Assessment – Prioritized Findings

While progress has been made in the areas of student achievement, student leadership and student communication skills, the consensus of our stakeholders strongly suggest we continue in this direction and even hone in on more specific areas within the big ideas of our long-term outcomes.

SECTION III. Long-Term Outcomes

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 1. Improve Student Achievement in Literacy

Our primary purpose continues to be to ensure academic achievement of all students. We want all of our students to be successful in mastering the curriculum standards prekindergarten – fifth grade. As a high achieving school, we want to continue to increase the number of students who “Exceed” or score significantly above average on all standardized tests, while cultivating their critical thinking and problem solving skills, which in turn will create a solid educational foundation.

We will measure our progress on this long-term outcome using the following data:

- Annual Georgia Milestones (3rd-5th grades) ELA Results/Lexile Scores
- Annual ITBS (3rd, 5th grades) Reading Results
- STAR Data – Lexile Scores

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 2. Improve Student Communication Skills

In order to be successful in life, students need to know how to communicate their thoughts and ideas with others. Students need to be able to communicate in multiple ways: reading, writing, using technology, and speaking. Helping our students be communicators that are more effective will enable and equip them to both advocate for themselves as well as help problem solve with others.

We will measure our progress on this long-term outcome by the following data:

- Georgia Milestones (3rd-5th grades) ELA Results
- % of students speaking and addressing stakeholders at school events
- % of students utilizing technology routinely as a tool for learning

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 3. Increase the Quality of Student Leadership

In addition to improving student achievement and communication skills, we want to continue to develop and encourage their capacity to be leaders and build leadership skills. We believe that all students are leaders; each is responsible for the choices he/she makes and ultimately leads their own lives and learning. We want to continue to equip students with the tools to be self-reflective and empower them to take ownership of their learning, becoming advocates for themselves and for others.

We will measure our progress on this long-term outcome by the following data:

- % of students utilizing Student Portfolios
- % of students participating in Service Learning Opportunities (classroom, school, community)

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

FOCUS AREA 1. Improve Instructional Strategies

We will improve instructional strategies over the next three years by focusing professional development in the areas of Balanced Literacy Workshop Model and Project/Problem Based Learning. This will allow our teachers to increase student achievement in both the areas of reading and writing. This will also allow opportunities for teachers to plan more authentic curriculum units that integrate multiple subject areas and provide students with real world audiences/situations for their learning.

As indicators of progress, we will:

1. We will measure the increase in student achievement in the area of writing by using Lucy Calkins Units of Writing rubrics, both pre and post to measure growth. (Target TBD based on 2016-17 baseline data)
2. We will measure the increase in student achievement in the area of reading by using Lexile scores as pulled from STAR and/or GA Milestones. (Target TBD in 2016-17)
3. We will increase the number of curricular units that integrate multiple subject areas. Each grade level will integrate 2 cross-curricular units into their curriculum map by May 2018.
4. We will increase student opportunities to apply their learning to real world situations by implementing a PBL unit in Science or Social Studies. Each grade level will implement two PBL units into their curriculum maps by May 2019.

Summary of Strategic Initiatives:

- Project/Problem Based Learning: Teachers will be trained on the implementation of Project/Problem Based Learning in the K-5 classroom targeting the integration of multiple content areas. This will help us provide a richer learning environment that authentically provides real-world learning for our students.
- We will implement a Balanced Literacy Workshop Model in K-5 classrooms. This will help us increase opportunities for personalized learning and students' ability to set goals and progress at their own pace.

FOCUS AREA 2. Build Stakeholder & Community Engagement

The success of our students is dependent on the investment of our stakeholders and the larger community in their learning. It is critical that we continue to keep the community involved in the learning process of our students so they can continue to support their growth.

As indicators of progress, we will:

1. Train 100% of our K-5 teachers in the implementation of effective portfolio practices by the end of the 2016-17 school year.

2. We will measure the % of students who are able to articulate their learning by recording meaningful student entries into their learning portfolios. (Target TBD after teachers have been trained)
3. By the end of the 2016-2017 school year, 100% of our teachers will effectively utilize assessment data to guide instruction as demonstrated through PLC minutes.

Summary of Strategic Initiatives:

- Student Portfolios: Students will produce student portfolios that focus on setting goals, tracking goals, and reflecting on their learning. This will allow our students to better articulate their learning and become co-planners in the learning process.
- Community Events: We will build stakeholder and community engagement by offering community events where students share and articulate their learning experiences. This will increase the number of students who are able to articulate their learning to the larger community.

FOCUS AREA 3. Develop the leadership capacity of our instructional staff and students

We will develop the leadership capacity of our instructional staff and students by incorporating the 7-Habits throughout our instructional day. We will also implement a personalized professional development model for our staff. This will allow us to increase the quality of student leadership by building the capacity of our staff and students through a personalized learning model.

- As indicators of progress, we will:**
1. Each school year, we will increase the % of teachers leading professional learning opportunities inside/outside the building.
 2. ____% of students will be able to score a 3 or higher on the 7 Habits Leadership Self-Assessment Rubric, as rated by the teacher, supporting student growth in the area of collaboration in the academic setting during peer to peer interactions. (Baseline TBD Fall 2016)

Summary of Strategic Initiatives:

- Students will learn and demonstrate the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. These Habits lend themselves to increasing skills necessary for students to demonstrate leadership qualities. The 7 Habits will be applied throughout the school day, connect to classroom management routines, and used as a guide for acknowledging students.
- Teachers will participate in personalized professional development sessions to build their capacity and model a personalized learning environment.

SECTION V. Next Steps

Effective implementation of this strategic plan will require consistent communication with all stakeholders, and frequent progress monitoring. As a school community, we must be aware of our goals, maintain focus on our initiatives, and use our strategic plan as a guide for all of our practices.

Our school leadership and administrative teams and the School Governance Council will ensure we closely monitor the implementation of our plan at least monthly at regularly scheduled SGC and Leadership meetings. We will track the progress towards our goals at least quarterly. (See Implementation Road Map) These teams will disseminate information out to the groups that they lead and ensure they keep the community informed through websites and school-wide communications. We will develop visuals to keep our goals and the progress towards each goal at the forefront of what we do.

As we move towards execution and implementation of this plan, we will strategically map out the professional development for our teachers and then the implementation plan for our students. We will rely on vetted independent contractors, Fulton County program specialists, and the expertise of our own teachers to support the learning and growth of our staff. As we train the staff in new practices, we will let the community know how they can support their students along our journey. We will accomplish this in alignment with our community events initiative.