



SECTION III. Due August 15, 2013

SHAKERAG ELEMENTARY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2013 – 2016

SEPTEMBER 2013

SECTION I: Strategic Planning Background and Approach

In May 2012, the Georgia Board of Education voted to make Fulton County Schools the state's largest charter system. The Charter System Model offers freedom and flexibility, both at the school level and system-wide, to employ research-based methods to improve student achievement, even if such innovations would require exemptions to current state laws and regulations.

Given the new Charter System framework, individual schools within Fulton County have the ability to work in dramatically new ways. We are asking our communities to help drive change and to get involved in our schools. Our collective vision is that every Fulton County school will have a principal and local School Governance Council equipped to effectively lead in a charter system environment to improve student achievement through innovation and flexibility. Schools will be empowered to consider the best uses of resources at the local level and design innovative practices that align with school needs.

Shakerag Elementary began the strategic planning process in the spring of 2013. In order to plan our strategic direction forward, we first had to engage with our community to understand our specific challenges and opportunities, then work together to consider a path that collectively addresses them. Our School Leadership Team and our School Governance Council worked hand-in-hand to assess and evaluate where we are as a school in terms of our community perception, academic achievement and instructional programs, and look towards where we aspire to be in the future.

Our process included three distinct phases: Information & Needs Analysis, Long-term Outcomes & Theory of Change, and Action Plan & Monitoring. Developed over a period of several months and designed collaboratively with input and guidance from many stakeholders, this strategic plan represents our deliberate approach to shape and guide what Shakerag is and what we aspire to be. Our students deserve the best educational experience we can provide, and this plan sets our vision and direction for making that happen.

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SECTION II: Context for the Strategic Plan: The School and Its Environment

For every school, the strategic planning process begins with a thorough consideration of the questions "Where are we as a school?" and "What do we have to work with?" 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.

Our survey was designed 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” and that was made by one resident. All others (99.3%) rated Shakerag 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 for growth, including improving our communication and school outreach as well as looking into ways to provide foreign language opportunities for our students.

Our School Governance Council will continue to look for ways to communicate more effectively with our stakeholders, and will ensure school administration and our PTA Executive Board are aware of the community perceptions brought forth by our Environmental Scan.

II. Organizational 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 the data and compared results as appropriate to our state, county and local peer school groups. CRCT data was looked at primarily by examining the percent of our students in the “Exceeds” category (Level 3) and by ranking our “Exceeds” results in each subsection (Reading, ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies) against all other Fulton County schools. We noted that CRCT/ITBS data is collected yearly; each testing group is comprised of a different set of students so any increases/decreases from one year to the next should be considered with this in mind.

Overall, the data presents a very strong academic program at Shakerag. Students perform consistently in the top 5 in our county on nearly every tested grade in every tested subject. Further, our students perform statistically well above the national average, scoring at or above the 82th percentile in Reading and at or above the 90th percentile in Math on the ITBS in both 3rd and 5th grade (the national average is “50” as the ITBS is a norm-referenced test). In last fall’s independent School Quality Review (SQR), Shakerag was rated as “Distinguished” for our Academic performance – the highest ranking possible for any school. This SQR also rated Shakerag as either “Distinguished” or “Accomplished” in all five other measured areas (the six areas are Academics, Learning and Teaching, Leadership, Curriculum, Culture, Community Involvement). Specific recommendations for improvement were made in the areas of Writing, Data Analysis and Technology Utilization.

Our school is demographically diverse, having more than 800 students whose families come from all over the world. Approximately 36% are Indian, 20% Korean, 10% Chinese/Japanese, 26% Caucasian and 8% African-American. Approximately 7% of our students qualify as English Language Learners (ELL), 26% of our students qualify for Fulton County’s Talented and Gifted (TAG) program, and 12% qualify for Special Education services (Speech and/or IRR services).

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 teacher’s *Instructional Strategies* and *Academically Challenging Environment* ratings (standards 3 and 8 from our Georgia TKES evaluation instrument).

As a team we also identified areas to target for continuous improvement, specifically looking at our aggregate writing performance (while our scores increased significantly this year to meet or exceed our peers, our overall performance is not yet consistently at this high level) as well as continuing to increase our students’ critical thinking abilities and looking at improving the instructional effectiveness of all teaching staff. We want to continue to improve our academic performance in all subject areas, further increasing the amount of students who “Exceed” on all sections of the CRCT.

In addition to looking for ways to improve our teacher instruction and providing an appropriately challenging environment for our students, we want to further foster our students’ leadership and communication skills while increasing their engagement in school and for their learning.

SECTION III: Long-term Outcomes

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 1. Improve Student Achievement

Our primary purpose is to ensure excellent academic achievement of all students. We want all our students to be successful in mastering the curriculum standards at each grade level. 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 skills and providing each with a strong educational foundation.

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

- Annual CRCT (3rd – 5th grades) Reading, ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies (% Exceeds)
- Annual ITBS (3rd, 5th grades) Reading, Math

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 2. Develop 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. By helping our students be more effective communicators we enable and equip them to both advocate for themselves as well as help problem solve for others.

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

- Annual GA 5th Grade Writing Assessment (% Exceeds)
- % of students instructed in a foreign language
- % of students utilizing technology routinely as a tool for learning

LONG-TERM OUTCOME 3. Foster Student Leadership

In addition to improving student achievement and communication skills, we want to develop and encourage their leadership. 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 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 Leadership Notebooks
- % of students participating in Student-Led Conferences
- % of students participating in Service Learning Opportunities (classroom, school, community)

SECTION IV: Focus Areas, Objectives, and Strategic Initiatives

FOCUS AREA 1. Instructional Rigor and Relevance

As a staff, we will focus on our classroom instruction to better engage students in higher order thinking and increase the real-world application of knowledge in an appropriately challenging environment.

As measures of progress, we will:

1. Increase student performance in writing (% Exceeds) on Georgia 5th Grade Writing Assessment
2. Increase effectiveness of Instructional Strategies, measured by % teachers rated Proficient/Exemplary on TKES Standard 3
3. Increase Academically Challenging Environment, measured by % teachers rated Proficient/Exemplary on TKES Standard 8
4. ITBS 3rd and 5th grade Critical Thinking Percentile

Summary of Strategic Initiatives:

- Increase PLC effectiveness by developing Common Formative Assessments (Math 1st Semester, Reading 2nd Semester) and utilizing WriteScore data
- Calibrate TKES ratings with Grade Chairs in Standards 3 and 8 (Instructional Strategies and Academically Challenging Environment), creating school-wide expectations for each area, partner with State Bridge Crossing Leadership Team to conduct school-to-school calibration and implement Peer Observation opportunities for all teachers
- Move towards Balanced Literacy, utilizing Leveled Libraries and integrated Science/Social Studies instruction

FOCUS AREA 2. Student Engagement

As a staff, we want to provide an engaging instructional environment that appropriately challenges all students and provides each an opportunity to be engaged in our school program.

As measures of progress, we will:

1. Increase use of technology as a learning tool, as measured by Technology Integration Matrix
2. Increase student leadership opportunities, as measured by % of students participating in classroom/school-wide leadership roles

Summary of Strategic Initiatives:

- Expand BYOT initiative to multiple grades, pursue additional mobile devices and classroom resources
- Create Advanced Strategies Lab for all 1st – 5th grade students
- Employ Instructional Technology Support Teacher (ITST) 50% or more
- Increase student foreign language proficiency by partnering with Northview High School to provide student facilitators (AP Spanish students) and pursuing additional avenues for foreign language instruction (technology)
- Expand student roles in action teams and host Leadership Day (May)

FOCUS AREA 3. Student Relationships (with self and others)

As a staff, we want to expand students’ ownership of their learning, maximizing student opportunities to lead and serve (self and others).

<p>As measures of progress, we will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase student accountability for their learning as measured by % of students creating, maintaining and utilizing Leadership Notebooks 2. Increase student advocacy, as measured by % of students participating in data chats and Student-Led Conferences

Summary of Strategic Initiatives:

- Develop/Utilize Leadership Notebooks for all students, implement periodic data chats
- Initiate Student-Led Conferences, beginning in 5th grade
- Increase amount of student leadership roles and interest-based opportunities through coordinating action teams around school activities, events and learning opportunities
- Encourage service projects for interested students

SECTION IV. Due September 30, 2013

SECTION V: Next Steps

In order to provide appropriate oversight and monitoring of our strategic plan, responsibility is shared by administrative/leadership team as follows:

- **Principal:** Overall school leadership and implementation; TKES calibration with Grade Level Team and State Bridge Crossing Elementary School; Evaluation of all teachers; Creation/Implementation of Advanced Strategies Lab; Hiring/Supervision of Instructional Technology Support Teacher; Coordination of PLC/Common Formative Assessments development; Coordinate partnership with Northview HS Spanish students
- **Assistant Principal:** Lead staff and student Lighthouse Teams (coordinating increasing student leadership roles, Student-Led Conferences and organizing/hosting Leadership Day); Coordinate Teacher Peer Observation program; Evaluation of all teachers (support principal)
- **Curriculum Support Teacher (CST):** Lead embedded Balanced Literacy professional learning with Principal/Assistant Principal support; Coordinate WriteScore assessments and development of team SMART goals; Facilitate grade level creation/use of common assessments; Coordinate implementation of school-wide RTI during morning “team time”
- **Counselor:** Create student peer-mentoring program, help coordinate student leadership roles and provide support for student-led conferences
- **Technology Specialist:** Oversee BYOT expansion; help coordinate technology integration into Advanced Strategies Lab
- **Instructional Technology Support Teacher:** Oversee pre/post Technology Integration Matrix; Support teacher/student use of technology as learning tool to help develop critical thinking
- **Grade Chairs:** Leading teams in development of common assessments; Lead teams in developing SMART goals based on WriteScore data; Participate in Leadership Development/Accountability initiative to enhance leadership skills
- **Classroom Teachers:** Provide student leadership opportunities; Utilize Leadership Notebooks; Incorporate
- **All Staff:** Modeling through actions, participating in action teams and developing personal Leadership Notebooks

Progress will be monitored throughout the year with status checks monthly based upon implementation schedule of various activities. Leadership Team meets monthly for “Accountability” updates on progress towards school goals. Common assessments are scheduled to be created/implemented each semester and WriteScore Assessments are scheduled for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd nine weeks. A timeline for moving towards Balanced Literacy in all classrooms is in progress, as we work with our new ELA series to create/utilize Leveled Libraries in each classroom and for the school. Organizing our student leadership roles/action teams has begun; staff/student Lighthouse Teams meetings are scheduled each month and our Leadership Day is planned for May 2014.