



# **Executive Summary**

## **Greene County Schools**

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## **Introduction**

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school system 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 system, and the kinds of programs and services that a school system implements to support student learning.

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

## **Description of the School System**

**Describe the school system'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 system serves?**

Greene County was founded in 1786, and named for General Nathanael Greene. It was not until the 1800s, that Greene County would be on the edge of civilization in Georgia.

The 406.2 square mile county is composed of five cities: Union Point, Siloam, White Plains, Woodville and the county seat, Greensboro. Greene county has blossomed into a desirable small rural community located approximately 79 miles east of downtown Atlanta and approximately 60 miles west of James Brown's birthplace, Augusta, and 30 miles south of Athens, home of Georgia's flagship university the University of Georgia (UGA). Greene County has contiguous borders to Hancock, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Putnam and Taliaferro counties. A third of Greene County is made up of the Oconee National Forest. Residents enjoy having 16.5 miles of Interstate 20 running through the county, and Lake Oconee, along our western boundary, with 374 miles of shoreline, supporting upscale, recreation, residential and resort developments.

The 2012, county population reported at 16,151, with annual growth at 2 %. The per capita income is \$36,831 and cost of living index is 85.5%. The Non-Union labor force is 7,200 with a 9.5% unemployment rate. Using 2010 US Census data, the County is 56% white and 38% Black, with a growing Hispanic population. Twenty-one percent (21%) of the county's population is under age 21 and 20% of the population is over age 65.

The school community provides higher education opportunities for its citizens with 2-Year college options at the Greensboro campus of Athens Technical College and the Georgia Military college located (44 miles) in Milledgeville, GA. Four year options are the University of Georgia (33 miles) and Georgia College and State University (44 miles).

The Greene County School System (GCSS) consists of one K-5 elementary school; one K-6 elementary; one middle school (6-8); one high school (9-12); one start up Charter School (K-7); two Alternate Programs (6-12; and one State Lottery funded Pre-K Program. The school staffing formula used in Greene County provides a teacher student ratio of: K-2, 1:20; K-3, 1:23; 4-8, 1:25, and 9-12, 1:25.

GCSS has a total of 300 employees (certified & non-certified). Of the 179 teachers employed, all are 100% highly qualified with 29% holding BS/BA degrees, 45% holding MA/MS degrees, 20% holding Specialist degrees and 6% holding doctorates. Twenty-three percent (23%) of GCSS teachers have taught four years or less, 24% have taught 5-10 years, 14% have taught 11-15 years, 12% have taught 16-20 years, and 27% have taught 21 or more years. Ninety-seven (97) employees are classified staff and 26 staff members are administrators.

The system's student population, as depicted, is approximately 2200 students (including charter school enrollment) and does not mirror the community, as the community is majority white, while the school district is majority minority. Sixty-four percent of the student population is African American, 8% are Hispanic, 26% are White, and 2% are other. The largest growing racial group is Hispanic, while enrollment trends reveal a small increase in white student enrollment.

While Greene County is considered one of the wealthiest Counties in the state, according to demographics the system is basically a minority rural school district, serving in a community with a growing aging population. Many of the new residents of Greene County are retirees.

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moving to Georgia from other regions of the country and have no children attending school. In 2010-11 Greene County's English Language Learner (ELL) students accounted for 2.8% (58 students) of the student population. The 2011-12 ELL student population was 3.7% (83 students). Additionally, 224 students or 11% are identified as students with special needs (SWD).

The district's enrollment has increased as the charter school has grown. However, over the past three years, there has been a pattern of very slow increase in new student enrollment in the district. The overall student enrollment increased by 171 students from 2008 through 2012. The Greene County School System is considered a 100% Free and Reduced lunch eligible school district. The two traditional elementary, middle and high schools qualify for Title I funding.

The state's contribution to educating GCSS students has resulted in reduced QBE funding over the past 4.5 years. The major funding support for the school district's budget is funded by the local taxpayers in that 80+% of the dollars come from the millage rate. While state funding has diminished to less than \$3 million for 2012-13, federal funds have assisted the district greatly. For 2012-13, GCSS has been awarded in excess of \$5.1 million in federal funds. However, the School Improvement Grant (SIG) will end in 2014. This will result in a loss in funding in excess of \$1.2 million. With the loss of the penny sales tax, budgeting has been very lean for the past two years.

From 2008 until 2010, the mil rate was 10 mil. During school year 2010-11, the millage rate went up to 10.2 and in 2011-12, the mill rate went up to 11.79. No staff person in our school district has received an increase (raise) in salaries for the past five years. (The exception to that is the state mandated step increases and those increases secured from additional education).

Greene County schools are in a community where volunteers are very much present. There exists a growing pool of community friends and neighbors wanting to work with GCSS students and help them to achieve. This trend extends to the faith community, business, arts and letters, and our community neighbors. The district has discovered that our retirees have much talent to share and are willing to do so.

GCSS challenges continue to be moving students forward academically and preparing them to do work at the next grade level, in light of socio-economic constraints. As the bar is raised with the transition to Common Core, this challenge becomes more daunting. The district uses the North West Evaluation Association/MAP (NWEA) as a nationally normed assessment for all students. This test is also used to assess student performance in mathematics and reading for all grades. However, the district has found that while this test accurately predicts the learning for students K-8, it is not as helpful in the high school grades. Despite its limitations, NWEA is very helpful for measuring the growth of GCSS students from one year to the next. Growth measurement is essential; the district must know its data and make informed data driven decisions, as the state moves in this direction with the Teacher and Leader Keys Effectiveness Systems (TKES and LKES) and with the introduction of the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI).

## **System's 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.**

GCSS is committed to continuous improvement. The district began the renewal process with the drafting of its Strategic Plan in 2009. Input was received from all stakeholder groups-administrators, Board members, teachers, staff, students, parents, business and community members.

The strategic planning process was a comprehensive exploration of:

- 1) Who are we?
- 2) Where are we now?
- 3) Where do we want to go?
- 4) How will we know when we have arrived?
- 5) How do we plan to get there?

Through the planning process the district's mission, vision, and belief statements were revised and aligned to guide the work. The district's mission is "to educate, inspire, challenge, and support students to be productive citizens prepared to compete globally." The district's vision is that "Greene County Schools will be regarded as the innovative model for excellence as a teaching and learning community." The 5-year Strategic Plan was generated to provide purpose and direction, improve all district operations, and align resources. All district and school improvement plans are filtered through the lens of the Strategic Plan to ensure alignment. All professional learning and federal fund allocation decisions are made in alignment with the Strategic Plan.

To support continuous improvement in Greene County Schools, Victoria Barnhart was brought in to the district in 2011. The Data Institute facilitate by Barnhart helped clarify our goal progression. Attendees learned the importance of considering multiple measures of data in pursuit of school improvement. From this training the work of the district now entails analysis of student learning, demographic, perception, and school processes data. Together these data sources provide a complete picture, so that the district can clearly discern and address strengths and weaknesses, not just the symptoms. This training spurred the district and schools onto data driven decision making. Data rooms have been created in each school. These rooms are truly about the work and not just for show. Data drives the work of academic coaches in the district. Classroom teachers utilize data in planning for instruction. NWEA, Classwork, and Compass Learning have especially proven beneficial for aligning individual student performance with personalized programs of instruction.

As further evidence of its commitment to continuous improvement, the district is currently embarking upon comprehensive school reform. Taking insights gained through the AdvancED internal review process, GAPSS analyses, district-wide walkthroughs, TKES and LKES pilots, and historical data the comprehensive school reform model of choice will focus on processes and will include an overhaul in teaching and learning, accountability, governance and professional learning practices within the district.

The great impetus for continuous improvement is the desire to adequately prepare the students of Greene County for their future, equipping them with necessary 21st century skills to be globally competitive, to take care of themselves and their families, and to be contributing members of society. For Greene County Schools, it is truly "All about the children."



## **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.**

Awards and Achievements 2010-2011 School Year

Union Point Elementary School as well as the district's charter school, Lake Oconee Academy, achieved AYP status for the 2010-2011 school year.

Greensboro Elementary School was one of 35 schools from 19 school systems across the state designated as a 2010 "No Excuses" School by the Georgia Public Policy Foundation. A No Excuses school has a poverty rate above the state average of 51 percent, meets Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by the No Child Left Behind law and has a Poverty Indicator of 2 or above on the Foundation's Report Card for Parents.

Carson Middle School received Honorable Mention as a 2011 High Flying School sponsored by the National Youth-At-Risk Conference in collaboration with the National Network for Educational Renewal. The school was one of only 10 schools out of the 40 placed in nomination to receive this distinction.

The Greene County School System received the 2011 American School Board Journal's Magna Award for enrollment under 5,000 for its Shuffle Your Teacher Home program. The interactive program helps English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students with their English language and other skills.

Greensboro Elementary School was named a Georgia Title I Distinguished School. Title I schools that receive this award have made AYP for three consecutive years or more.

Carson Middle School was authorized as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, making it the only IB Middle Years Programme available in its region.

Susan Wells, a third grade teacher at Greensboro Elementary School, received a New Teacher Assistance Grant from Georgia Power. Teacher nominations were submitted to Georgia Power by the 20 Georgia public colleges and universities that have a school of education. To be eligible for the grant, candidates had to be in the top 25 percent of their class academically, be a first-year teacher employed by a public school in Georgia and demonstrate a high aptitude for teaching.

Superintendent Dr. Barbara Pulliam Davis received the Joseph E. Hill Superintendent of the Year Award from the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE). The award is presented to current superintendents who have demonstrated a quality of leadership that resulted in significant positive outcomes for students of African descent.

Greene County High School teacher Rotonya Rhodes received the Mary McLeod Bethune Outstanding Teacher Award from the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE). This award is awarded to teachers whose innovative teaching techniques have led to an increase in student achievement through demonstrating unparalleled commitment and innovation toward enhancing the quality of instruction.

Greene County High School senior Keyerra Monfort was named a 2011 Gates Millennium Scholar. This is the second consecutive year

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Greene County has had a Gates Millennium Scholar named from its high school.

Greene County School System won a competitive grant from Race to the Top funds (RTT) in the amount of \$4.2 million to be spent over the next three years. These funds are used for staff training and the purchase of technology devices for students and staff for support of high school program reforms in Greene County.

### Awards and Achievements 2011-2012 School Year

Greensboro Elementary School Media Center received a grant from Target. The grant money was used to host an evening Family Reading Night event for students and their family members.

Fabian Bowman, a seventh-grade life science teacher at Carson Middle School, was among 40 of Georgia's best and brightest new teachers to receive a New Teacher Assistance Grant from Georgia Power. Teacher nominations were submitted to Georgia Power by the 20 Georgia public colleges and universities that have a school of education. To be eligible for the grant, candidates had to be in the top 25 percent of their class academically, be a first-year teacher employed by a public school in Georgia and demonstrate a high aptitude for teaching.

Greensboro Elementary School Principal Dr. Joan Antone received the Marcus Foster Distinguished Educator Award at the 2011 National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) conference. The Marcus Foster Distinguished Educator Award is bestowed upon individuals who have exercised exceptional leadership qualities and who, through their talents, have made systemic impacts in the field of education.

Makayla Mathews, an 8th grader at Carson Middle School, was nominated and accepted as a People to People Student Ambassador to China for the summer of 2012. As a People to People Student Ambassador, Makayla will spend 17 days travelling through Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai, Wuzhen and Hong Kong with 30 other students her age from South Carolina and Georgia.

Union Point Elementary School received a Bronze award for making great gains on state assessments under the Single Statewide Accountability System (SSAS). Great gains schools are recognized for demonstrating significant improvement on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) or the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT).

Lake Oconee Academy received a Silver award for high performance on state assessments under the Single Statewide Accountability System (SSAS). High performance schools are recognized for high achievement on the CRCT or GHSGT.

Union Point Elementary School was named a Georgia Title I Distinguished School. Title I schools that receive this award have made AYP for three consecutive years or more.

Linsey Meng, a member of the Greene County High School FFA Chapter was named the state winner in the Small Animal Production and Care Proficiency. As the state winner, Linsey competed at the National FFA Convention held in Indianapolis, IN. She received a plaque, \$100 cash, and \$500 travel money to attend the National FFA Convention for winning the state competition.

Greensboro Elementary School fifth graders Keedon Reid and Tony Rowland placed first in their region in the Stock Market Games. Fourth graders Mya Greene and Nakayla Hudson placed second in their region after competing against more than 20 teams, which included middle school and high school students.

Greene County High School FFA member Jaylen Sneed placed third in the Area II FFA Prepared Public Speaking Career Development Event. The FFA Prepared Public Speaking Career Development Event is designed to develop agricultural leadership. Participants are required to write and deliver a four to six minute long speech on an agricultural-related topic. The participants are judged on content and

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composition of the manuscript, voice, stage presence, power of expression, general effect and response to questions asked by a panel of judges. Jaylen chose to speak on the importance of agricultural careers.

Carson Middle School students Abigail Johnson and Hannah Mason placed second at the State Technology Fair. The pair created a PowerPoint presentation that won first place at the school level and at the Regional Technology. Their presentation had nearly 200 slides and demonstrated how to create animation using PowerPoint.

Carson Middle School's media center was one of 238 school libraries awarded a grant from the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries for 2012.

### Awards and Achievements 2012-2013 School Year

Donna Jones, library media specialist at Greensboro Elementary School was selected by the Georgia Association of Instructional Technology (GAIT) and the Georgia Library Media Association (GLMA) as the Library Media Specialist of the Year for the Northeast GA District. Library Media Specialist of the Year Award recipients must demonstrate individual excellence in the library media field through service to students, teachers and the community at the K-12 levels.

Greene County High School senior Hernandez Wynn was selected for membership into the National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS). The Society recognizes top scholars and invites only those students who have achieved academic excellence. Hernandez, an honor student and student athlete, has a 3.81 GPA and is in the top 10 of his class.

Greene County School System Department of Communications received three Georgia School Public Relations Association (GSPRA) Silver Merit awards and three Gold Excellence awards for exceptional publications and electronic media, as well as one Best in Category award.

Billy Hobbs, staff writer with the Lake Oconee News, received the 2012 Print Media Beacon Award presented by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA). The Beacon Award is presented to print and electronic media representatives or organizations whose coverage over time has created understanding of public education issues by informing the general public about programs, policies and issues affecting public schools, students and communities. The Greene County Board of Education nominated Mr. Hobbs for the award.

Greene County High School AFJROTC unit, Tiger Group, placed 4th in both the Armed Color Guard division and the Armed Regulation division at the Blue Devil Drill Classic. A total of 18 schools competed in the Drill Classic.

Greene County High School senior wide receiver Rikeen Stallings was named to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution's Class AA All-State Team.

All District Principals and Assistant Principals received their TKES credentials this school year. All District Principals as well as GCHS Assistant Principal have also earned their LKES credentials. Credentialing is required this year for GCHS because of the School Improvement Grant. For the 2012-2013 school year, the school system implemented TKES and LKES at GCHS in compliance with SIG and piloting TKES and LKES in all other schools. These evaluation systems will roll out state-wide in the 2013-2014 school year.

Students from across the district participated in the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl eastern regional competition. Division winners were: Placing 2nd in the elementary school division was Lake Oconee Academy, followed by Greensboro Elementary School placing 3rd. In the middle school division, Lake Oconee Academy's team placed 3rd and Carson Middle School's team placed 4th. Greene County High School placed 7th in the high school division.

Greensboro Elementary School student NaKayla Hudson won the County-wide Spelling Bee.

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Union Point STEAM Academy student Breanna Coffman placed 2nd at the Northeast Georgia Regional Science and Engineering Fair and received the Naval Science Award from the Office of Naval Research. Breanna's entry was a mechanical engineering project that used recyclable materials (aluminum cans) to efficiently distribute heat evenly across an area. The Science and Engineering Fair is a fierce competition that involves public, private and home school students from Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Franklin, Greene, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Walton, and White counties.

Carson Middle School student Joshua Gunn placed 3rd with his project "Quick Relief" at the Northeast Georgia Regional Science and Engineering Fair. The Science and Engineering Fair is a fierce competition that involves public, private and home school students from Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Franklin, Greene, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Walton, and White counties.

## **Additional Information**

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

Greene County has district wide non-negotiables which are the additional requirements for our kindergarten and third grade students. This means that we are requiring kindergarteners to learn the 225 site words needed to ensure that they are readers as they enter grade one. Research says that kindergarteners need to know more than the number required by Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Greene County kindergarteners are expected to know more so that they exceed proficiency in this very basic area.

As for our third grade students, their additional requirement is to know their times tables up to 12! By the end of the first semester, third graders need to know how to multiply so they can do the additional multiplication problems in the second semester of third grade. After all, in order to learn division, you need to know and understand your multiplication tables.

In October we began training any and all volunteers who wanted to help us with this project. This means each volunteer will be asked to work with groups of four to six students on site words or times tables one day per week. We want the volunteer to work with the same students over specified "chunks" of time.

In addition, all students are expected to "Speak Greene". This is identified as those soft skill used to prepare students to enter into today's competitive market by improving public speaking skills. This is a non-negotiable!