



Executive Summary

Hayesville High School

Clay County School System

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Executive Summary Introduction

Executive Summary

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and student learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way school leadership considers how to organize, maintain order, and stay faithful to the school's vision. A description of the level of stakeholder engagement, trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that the school implements to support student learning also contributes to the overall narrative.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to give schools an opportunity to tell their story, to describe their context both strengths and challenges so that the public and members of the school community have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and what it is deliberating as it engages in the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement.

This report is structured into 4 sections that give context about what the school faces on a day-to-day basis in providing teaching and learning in its community:

Section 1: Introduction

- Describes the community in which the school is located. Identifies the unique features and special challenges of this school community. Provides brief demographic information with regards to both students and staff and the community at large.

Section 2: Student Performance

- Gives a brief description of the school's vision about students and their performance.
- Provides a brief summary of student performance in this school. Identifies the school's goals and how the school will know they have achieved them. Describes the variety of the school's student performance assessments. Identifies how the staff engages in meaningful analysis of student work in order to modify instruction.
- Describes the school's student support programs and services. Identifies the ways in which the school ensures community/parent involvement in the life of the school.

Section 3: Challenges and Opportunities

- Identifies the major challenges the school has faced in the last 3 years and how it has addressed those challenges.

Section 4: Conclusion

- Identifies what the school is most proud of and why.
- Relates other information the school would like to share with the public and the school community.

Executive Summary

Section 1: Introduction

Provide the school's mission statement. What process was used to create the mission statement?

Describe how the school engaged its stakeholders to parents and community members in the development and fulfillment of the mission statement. Describe the community in which your school is located. What are the unique features and special challenges of your school community?

Briefly provide demographic information with regards to both students and staff and the community at large.

Narrative:

The mission and newly reformed vision and purpose statements of Hayesville High School are products of past and current philosophies of school direction. The former successes, it is believed, are not enough to sustain proper growth for students in the future. Hayesville High School's mission facilitates the optimum academic, physical, social, and emotional development of all students through the recognition of individual learning styles and diversity. We want each student to graduate with the confidence and preparedness to become a productive citizen and lifelong learner. Our new Vision and Purpose statement encourages the preparedness of our students to become leaders with a tradition of excellence through a quality education. Hayesville High School faculty and staff recognizes each student's unique learning style and will promote confidence and hone students' skills to become globally competitive citizens while sustaining high moral character.

The process to redefine our vision and purpose included all stakeholders—parents, students, administrators, community representatives, and teachers. Each prospective group who are representatives from the School Improvement Team discussed possible revisions and submitted tentative statements to our Standard 1—Vision and Purpose—subcommittee. This subcommittee developed our new vision and purpose which was presented to our entire faculty for comments, suggestions, and editing. It was also presented for a second time to the entire faculty at planning period meetings for the final revisions. Stakeholders' additions, comments, and suggestions were considered. The School Improvement Team created the Vision and Purpose Statement from this process and we wanted to include all facets of our previous mission statement and what we want our students to become in the 21st century. To support our stated vision, we have included the following purposes:

- Our school will provide a safe and stimulating learning environment that promotes a healthy lifestyle.
- Students will have confidence to meet challenges of higher education.
- Students and teachers will be held to high learning expectations.
- We will develop lifelong learners.
- Our school will promote and develop effective communication skills.
- Students will be challenged through a variety of diverse academic requirements.
- Rigorous courses will have relevance for all students.
- All students will become technologically competent to compete in a challenging global environment.
- All students can learn and achieve individual success.
- Our school will utilize and communicate with community stakeholders.

HHS is a traditional public school with a current enrollment of 383 students. It is the only high school in Clay County, a system serving 1,384 students. The school geographic location is in the far western corner of North Carolina. This isolated, mountainous community is approximately 100 miles from any major urban setting; Atlanta, Chattanooga, Greenville, and Asheville are those centers. The population of Clay County is 10,587 with an area of 215 square miles. Eighty percent of the land is considered US Forest land. The population growth over the past decade is 20.6%, most of this coming from retirement or urban relocation. This pattern of growth is economically vital for county revenues and for projections for the future economic progress of the county. There are no primary industries in the community. The Board of Education is the largest single employer in the county. A service-based community, Clay County has recently been affected by the market decrease in housing and real estate. The median household income is \$39,300 (2009) and approximately 17% of the population lives below the poverty level.

One university is relatively close while several very large universities are within three hours drive. Five community colleges are within one hour, and Tri-County Community College is about a fifteen-minute drive from the high school. A TVA-supported lake provides the community with an aesthetic appearance and desirable place to settle. Therefore, the school setting gets much of the concentration and emphasis from people living in the community. The school is located inside the town/county seat of Hayesville. The community is not, however, void of cultural influence and transference. Many families from distances have made the community home. Cultural influences from Metro Atlanta, Central and South Florida and from popular media have transformed an Appalachian community into a surprisingly progressive school climate. The racial and ethnic breakdown is as follows:

Caucasian:	96.6%
Hispanic or Latino:	2.4%
Multiracial:	1.4%
African-American:	0.6%
American Indian:	0.3%
Asian Pacific:	0.2%
White, not Hispanic:	95.2%

All three county schools are located on this one campus. The “union-school” mindset (K-12) has been in existence for nearly a century. The setting presents some minor challenges for student acculturation, but has many useful, positive benefits for parents and businesses in the county. Students can move throughout their entire public school experience with no major transitions, and with the knowledge and understanding of expectations. This model also allows for efficiency in administrative operation.

Thirty-three full time teachers are employed at Hayesville High School. Every teacher meets “Highly Qualified” status. Five educational assistants work alongside the certified teachers supplementing and enhancing education. On-line classes are encouraged for those students who either need advancement or special assistance for their education. Seventeen teachers have advanced degrees and fifteen teachers are National Board (NB) certified teachers. Five are currently enrolled in graduate programs and two are awaiting news of renewal of NB Certification.

The curriculum and daily schedule follows a traditional block format. There are 122 courses offered in the curriculum. An intense curriculum for all students is part of the high expectation from school and home. Seventy-nine percent of the graduating class of 2012 are preparing for college-based training, either four-year, two-year, or skill-training classes. HHS offers regular education, college preparatory, honors classes, AP classes, and six different Career Technical Education programs. Thirty-seven percent of our students are enrolled in Honors or Advanced Placement classes. Our CTE programs include Business, Family and Consumer Science, Health Occupations, Trade and Industrial classes, Automotive Technology, and Consumer Management. Our mean SAT score (2009, 2010) was 1001. Also in 2009, HHS was awarded “School of Excellence”, primarily due to 90% proficiency performance. The most recent graduation rate percentages showed HHS at 87.6% and 86.49% respectively. There has been consistency in both student performance and graduation percentages for several years. The preliminary drop-out rate for 2010 shows a 2.97% rate, still too high for acceptance.

Section 2: Student Performance

Give a brief description of your school's vision about students and their performance. Provide a brief summary of student performance in your school. What are your goals and how will you know you have achieved them?

Describe the variety of your school's student performance assessments. How does your staff engage in meaningful analysis of student work in order to modify instruction?

Describe the school's student support programs and services. In what ways does your school ensure community/parent involvement in the life of the school?

Narrative:

Student success is a primary expectation for teachers and, of course, the students. Our vision for students is for habits to form that will enhance the student's ability to excel in life and career. We believe this vision fulfills itself by our students learning from encouragement, rigorous planning, and high expectations for student success. In essence, we believe that the student's potential success is relative to the teacher's intensive commitment. Research and data show that students can initiate and control their learning patterns with teacher facilitation. The faculty at HHS concur and promote self-learning as an integral part of future success. Yet, we also believe that teachers, visible and challenging, will not only ensure higher achievement and greater confidence, but transfer relational skills also needed for individual success in later years. Human contact and adult interaction in the classroom cannot be replaced if we truly wish to influence the generation ahead. Our Vision statement lists such phrases as safe and stimulating environment, student confidence, high expectations, lifelong learners, and effective communication skills. We believe that adult interpersonal skills promote learning and set standards for life-long learning. Building relationships with all of our students is imperative for the success of student performance.

All students have unique and diverse learning styles. Some students perform well in traditional settings, some in technological settings, and some perform well in their own eccentric ways. HHS faculty are encouraged to recognize and promote individual learning to all students. New ways of transferring knowledge are being practiced among the faculty and staff at HHS. We are trying, with some unexpected success, differentiated instructional practices among different curriculum. Professional Learning Communities can focus on specialized learning styles. We are promoting an experimental Professional Learning Community (PLC) that we hope to launch next school year. Students and teachers, currently though, are proving their success in the more traditional methods. Scores for HHS students are among the highest in the region and state according to the State Report Card. Data in past three-year period renders this true. In 2011, student performance in state-tested subjects showed that HHS students were as follows:

English I – 95.0% State avg. – 82.4%

Algebra I – 90.9% State avg. - 77.8%

Biology - 90.0% State Avg. - 81.2%

Writing scores have stayed consistent (82--88% yearly) and also well above state and regional average. Our subgroup scores are, in some cases 25 points, higher than average. Therefore, we know that we are doing many things well. Our dilemmas still exist, though. For instance, last year HHS did not make AYP. We missed target goals due to our inability to cross student barriers. Still, we know that when you perform well and show growth, the margin for growth diminishes. Another recognized dilemma is that other systems/schools are making progress with more modern methods. HHS staff members understand that future success relies on our adaptability to new approaches and challenges.

Statistical proof is important; however, we recognize one glaring obstacle that must be addressed. When ANY student lacks success, we face the danger of problems in that student and for society. At HHS, we strive to raise our success levels not for statistics, but for the individual. We believe that every student should experience success; that every young person possesses abilities that are unique to that person. We must work to ensure that all students feel confident and successful in some area of school. The after-school learning lab is available to all students who might need a quiet place to study or assistance with school assignments. We lose students yearly because they get passed over and behind along the journey. This is a major dilemma!

HHS has organized a unique team strategy that identifies and addresses certain students that are at-risk for several reasons. Our

Student Services Team (SST) is comprised of faculty members and community stakeholders that meets regularly, every two to three weeks, to target and monitor students that may be in danger either in attendance, academically, or behaviorally. We have seen patterns that students develop that can be negative or counterproductive for the student and the school. Attendance problems become academic problems. Academic problems become behavior problems. Behavior problems cause loss of classroom time. Our SST, headed by the assistant principal brings in three teachers, the guidance counselor, a school resource officer, local agency representatives, and the Juvenile Justice officer to create plans for such students. Parents of at-risk students may be included for preventative measures. Teachers in HHS are familiar with and discreetly address the targeted students as some individual teachers are asked to mentor and be an advocate for these students. Privacy and integrity are integral for success for the team and student.

Our guidance department, one counselor and one associate, is highly effective in addressing academic and emotional situations on a daily basis. Our counselor is well-trained and highly successful in promoting solutions and making students aware of their "scope". Students have access to a vast amount of information regarding colleges and higher institutions. Two counselors are needed for optimal success. But resources are limited everywhere. Students can be granted waivers in order to take college entrance exams and complete one online application that is applicable for several colleges and universities across the nation.

Our Exceptional Children's Department (EC) works well with all students. We service many students that need reading and mathematical assistance. One newer concept we are practicing is Co-Teaching in the classroom. Traditional models of EC show a teacher in the classroom ONLY for EC students. Data has shown that a second teacher in the classroom promotes learning for all students, exceptional or regular-education based. Also, students recognize that two teachers in a classroom can enhance cooperative learning among students, regardless of their classification. The major issue with Co-Teaching is numbers. We have only three EC teachers and two assistants on staff now due to inability to replace teachers.

Our school encourages and welcomes parental and community involvement. We invite parents to be a part of their child's success both in school and away from school. An open-door policy is proclaimed throughout the district. Parents can volunteer with teachers and are encouraged to be part of extracurricular groups, like athletic and band booster clubs. Our teachers are frequently making contacts with parents about positives and negatives regarding their children. A small-town atmosphere can enhance this opportunity much better than larger schools can experience. We do not, however, have an active P.T.O. resource that we would desire to use for academic purpose. We have found that regularly scheduled open-house meetings bring parents to the schoolhouse after hours. Like most schools, we see that those students who may need the most attention have absentee parents. We have no solution yet for that.

Community involvement and support is prevalent throughout our school. These organizations assist students' basic school needs as well as individual needs. Communities-In-Schools assist students with school supplies, specific individual needs, and provide scholarships on an as-needed basis. Our yearbook is supported by many local businesses to offset the cost of production. Students can afford to buy yearbooks at a reasonable price. Athletic banner sponsors provide much needed support for all our athletic teams.

Online laboratories, one in the Media Center and one in the Online classroom, are set up for students that desire to take classes not offered in the daily curriculum and schedule. Students have access to college-level credits, NCVPS classes, foreign language classes, and special interest classes. Credit Recovery classes have, in the past, been unavailable to students. We would like to implement a plan to create credit recovery classes for students that have special and extenuating circumstances. These students would have the opportunity to recover needed credits for graduation and other purposes.

Section 3: Challenges and Opportunities

What are the major challenges your school has faced in the last 3 years and how have you addressed those challenges?

Narrative:

Like most other schools, one of the biggest challenges we are facing is lack of financial resources. Budget issues are affecting the student's ability to optimize learning and experience the best learning chances. Four classroom teachers have been lost over the past three years, either through retirement or reduction in force. HHS students are well above the state average in teacher-to-student ratio. State averages currently range between 18 to 20 students per teacher in most core classes (www.ncreportcards.org). HHS students experience higher ratios, even as high as 25 to 1 ratio. Our teachers are professionals, though. They handle this issue without quarrel or hesitation. They and their students still perform exceptionally as we await the time that we can reduce these number in favor of better student opportunity.

Instructional supplements are affected also. Many of our classroom and disciplines have not had a new "revision" of textbook in nine years. We are adjusting like others through the use of technology and the understanding that we are in a transitional period regarding the use of technology. We are thankful for a district that supports transition to technology and for Race-to-the-Top (RttT) resources that we are using to address this shortfall.

Our community lacks revenue and jobs. As earlier stated, much of the local income was based on the housing development, the same industry that crashed about three years ago. A large percentage of our students are products of this trickle-down, economic consequence. Their parents and families were tertiary service providers, builders, and recreational workers. Hardly any of these businesses exist now, forcing the parents to seek less-skilled jobs or jobs away from home. Our current student population growth has halted in the past two school years. If anything, this recessionary experience has proven to our students that there is great value in education and furthering their abilities.

HHS currently does not have an Alternative Learning Program for students that may need temporary or even permanent placement. The school has yet to establish a program that could be used in a manner that allows behavioral, attendance-based problem students, or academically unique students the special provisions that they may need. As society changes, we are seeing the need for alternative settings for students. A well-designed and well-run Alternative Learning Program can advance student success in the mainstream and in the special settings. Proposals for an alternative learning program have been discussed with our Central Office personnel and they agree that a program is needed. The obstacle is, of course, resources. Currently, though, we have the faculty, an off-campus facility, and a plan for implementation. Before the beginning of the 2012-13 school year, we hope to make progress toward this goal to meet the needs all our students.

Even among all the successes previously stated, we can do better at maximizing student opportunity. There is a limited number of Advanced Placement (AP) classes offered at our school. We offer only one AP class, Calculus, during the school day, and another, Music Theory, every other school year. With more offerings of AP classes, our students' critical thinking skills would be enhanced. However, we realize that if we add additional AP classes, then we must eliminate various elective courses. Teachers in the four primary disciplines have offered suggestions as to what classes should be included on the master schedule. Three of the four representatives were highly in favor of adding AP. In the next four-year period we plan to add the following AP classes to our curriculum: AP Statistics, AP Government, AP Biology, and AP Physics. Math and Social Studies will be the first-fruits. No determination has been made for Sciences yet. Central Office agrees that these classes can be afforded at a slow pace until monies show themselves. Also, Race-to-the-Top proposals favor AP additions.

Section 4: Conclusion

What is your school most proud of and why?

Is there any other information you would like to share with the public and the school community?

Narrative:

Hayesville High School has many things that define us and make us proud. Our student successes are what we may be most proud to display. Our successes are not only found in comparison in NC's State Report Card, but we believe successes are found in the number of students that are prepared for colleges and universities, and even in the number that finish with degrees. An extremely high percentage of our students choose a community college to attend in transition to a four-year degree later on. We are pleased with the number of students who go to technical schools and training centers to prepare for the workforce and careers. In the past 10 years, twelve of our students have enrolled in military academies. Our community, state foundations and federal agencies and beneficiaries show their trust and support by providing our students with scholarship monies. Examine these numbers from graduating classes from the past three years:

Year	Comm. College	4yr college	% of grads	Scholarship Amounts
2009	47.2%	40.6%	87.9%	\$525,000.00
2010	49.4%	35.0%	84.5%	\$1,160,000.00
2011	54.5%	34.0%	88.6%	\$1,527,000.00

We are delighted with the faculty that surrounds our students. Teacher turnover rate of 3% speaks volumes about our teachers and their caring and dedicated attitudes toward our student body. This faculty is intelligent and hard-working as they possess traits that might be even more valuable. As a whole, they are committed to our students. The students know this and state this to others. Intelligence and hard work will reap rewards, but add compassion and commitment and you cross unexpected barriers. We are happy with the relationships built by teachers and staff with students and their families. A consequence of this building, we believe, is confidence in community and security in students having abilities and skills to build relationships later on in their lives.

Our graduation rate--nearing 90% annually, precisely, 86.7%, and our drop-out rate of 2.97%--among the lowest in the state--is supported by competent and unselfish contributions from our entire faculty to ensure success for all students. We can't settle for these numbers as we strive for improvement. Our faculty and staff is cognizant of the need to reach every student.

In conclusion, we are proud of the high expectations that are experienced by staff, by administrators and by community stakeholders. Over the past 25 years, we have seen a philosophy grow, a philosophy that believed that we could be the best performing school in the region. Throughout the years, we have seen a community parallel the educators philosophy and commit to having the best school system possible. What we have experienced, though, has been quite unexpected. We hear often from parents and stakeholders that they send their children to school knowing that the students are in the safest, most efficient, and highest performing school possible. Of the high community expectations, we are quite proud!