



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

Strategic Improvement Planning Executive Summary

July 7, 2017

Oconee County Schools utilized a process developed by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) to develop a strategic improvement plan for the school system. This comprehensive process engaged the community and all stakeholder groups to create universal ownership and support for system and school improvement. Highlights of the process include:

- A comprehensive community engagement component to allow stakeholders to have a voice in the strategic improvement planning process
- A diverse planning team that represented stakeholder groups to develop the plan
- A facilitated planning process that assisted the planning and action teams in analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the school district and developing/defining the mission, vision, beliefs, goal areas and elements of the strategic improvement plan
- A facilitated process to work with experts within the district and community on developing initiatives and action steps to implement the plan

Continuous Improvement Model



The strategic improvement planning process follows a continuous improvement cycle designed around the five questions listed in the visual above. This process begins with a community engagement session and survey of stakeholders.



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

Community Engagement: In September, 2013, the strategic improvement planning process began with a community engagement session that involved over 260 representatives from all stakeholder groups. OCS also provided a stakeholder survey to gather vital input from the community and received 262 responses to the online survey.

Planning Team: In November, 2013 a group of 30 people representing stakeholder groups from the school board, central office, schools, parents, students, business and other community representatives were assembled to answer the questions: “Who are we?”, “Where are we now?”, and “Where do we want to go?”. Specific outcomes included a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, developing beliefs, mission and vision for the district, and developing strategic goal areas and priorities for the strategic improvement plan.

Action Teams: In January, February, and March, 2014 five teams totaling 32 people were assembled to answer the question “How will we know when we have arrived?”. The action teams looked at each proposed strategic goal area and identified the performance objectives, measures and targets to answer this question. Additionally, the action teams developed the initiatives and action steps to answer the fourth question of the GSBA Strategic Improvement Planning Process, “How do we plan to get there?”.

Action Team Report to Planning Team: In March, 2014 the Action Teams delivered a report of their work back to the planning team. The planning team reviewed the action team’s work and had the opportunity to provide feedback to the action team.

Phase II:

In April, 2014 the Chief Academic Officer presented the proposed mission, vision, motto, belief statements, five goal areas, performance objectives, priorities and the strategy map components of the strategic improvement plan to the board as an action item. The Superintendent recommended and the Board of Education approved the mission, vision, motto, belief statements, five goal areas, performance objectives, priorities, and the strategy map.

In May, 2014 the Chief Academic Officer presented the measures, initiatives and action step components of the strategic improvement plan to the board as an information item.

Phase III:

Alignment: The plan is aligned to the school improvement plans and the budget on an on-going basis.

Phase IV:

Implementation: Involves the execution, monitoring and reporting of the plan, as well as an on-going process to review and update the plan as needed.



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

In November, 2013 a group of 30 people representing stakeholder groups from the school board, central office, schools, parents, students, business and other community representatives met with the Georgia School Board Association and the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement. This planning team developed belief statements and reviewed the mission, vision and motto for the district.

Beliefs, Mission, Motto, and Vision

Belief Statements:

We believe that:

1. All students are important and their individual talents contribute to the diversity of the learning community.
2. All stakeholders are valued and essential to the success of our students.
3. Everyone is accountable for excellence.

Mission: The mission of Oconee County Schools is to provide a safe and challenging learning environment that inspires all students to capture their dreams.

Motto: Committed to student success

Vision: Oconee County Schools will be a nationally-recognized leader in academic achievement by ensuring that all students receive a rigorous, balanced education that will enable them to compete in and contribute to a global society.

OCS Strategic Goal Areas, Performance Objectives, and Priorities Aligned to *A Vision for Public Education in Georgia*

A Vision for Public Education: *Equity and Excellence* is the full report of a planning team convened through a joint venture between the Georgia School Boards Association and the Georgia School Superintendents Association. The report is the primary product of a two-year undertaking which involved a planning team composed of 15 local school superintendents and 15 local board of education members. Eleven facilitators and 30 college, university, and K-12 research associates provided ongoing support for the project. Nine community conversations were conducted over the state along with four student conversations to solicit the views of



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

citizens and secondary school students about the current state of public education and their hopes for the future.

The Vision Project planning team identified four crucial questions to guide the work:

1. What is the purpose of public education?
2. What are its goals?
3. What is our vision for public education?
4. What is the value of public education?

Through answering these questions, the Vision Project planning team developed this statement of belief: We believe that our envisioned future should include the assurance that every graduate of our public schools is prepared to be a contributing member of our American society. Our vision must have as its foundational premise the preparation of our students for college, career, and life.

The results of the Vision Project planning team's work are eight goal areas to encompass the work and the resulting recommendations for each of the eight components:

- 2.0: General
- 3.0: Early Learning and Student Success
- 4.0: Teaching and Learning
- 5.0: Teaching and Learning Resources
- 6.0: Human and Organizational Capital
- 7.0: Governance, Leadership, and Accountability
- 8.0: Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy
- 9.0: Financial Resources

The OCS planning team developed five Strategic Goal Areas that were vetted and slightly refined to ensure consistency in the wording.

1. Teaching and Learning
2. Human Resources
3. Operations and Student Services
4. Business Services
5. Stakeholder Engagement

The OCS planning team and action team developed performance objectives and priorities for each goal area. In addition, OCS has aligned the five goal areas with the eight goal areas of the Vision Project.

The Board of Education approved the beliefs, mission, vision, motto, goal areas, performance objectives, priorities, and strategy map.



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

OCS Goal Area 1: Teaching and Learning

Performance Objectives:

1. Prepare students for college and career success
2. Increase student achievement
3. Provide high quality professional learning, monitoring and support

Goal Area Priorities:

1. High quality instruction
2. Academic growth for all
3. College and career readiness
4. Globally competitive students

Vision for Public Education – 4.0: Teaching and Learning

- 4.1: In order to provide an environment where students learn best, ensure that teachers work and plan together, learn and share effective teaching practices, and are provided support for their on-going learning.
- 4.2: In order to provide an environment where students learn best, ensure that teachers use a variety of technologies to teach and measure what students know and can do.
- 4.3: In order to provide an environment where students learn best, ensure that teachers teach challenging and problem-solving lessons that are flexible enough to meet the interests and needs of individual students.
- 4.4: In order to provide an environment where students learn best, ensure that teachers use varied measures to determine what students know and can do.

Vision for Public Education – 5.0: Teaching and Learning Resources

- 5.1: Evaluate and utilize the most effective instructional models and learning supports (i.e. digital, blended, competency, virtual, etc.) implemented by school districts.
- 5.2: Ensure full integration of current technology and training into the classroom.
- 5.3 Continue to develop and maintain a comprehensive data system for monitoring student progress (Pre-K--12) and making decisions to improve educational practice.



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

OCS Goal Area 2: Stakeholder Engagement

Performance Objectives:

1. Develop effective processes and communicate them clearly
2. Pursue meaningful business partnerships
3. Pursue meaningful higher education partnerships

Goal Area Priorities:

1. Students
2. Staff/faculty
3. Parents
4. Community
5. Business
6. Communication
7. Transparency
8. Partnerships

Vision for Public Education – 8.0: Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy

- 8.3: Establish each school as the center or hub of the community in which it exists.
- 8.4: Determine stakeholder perceptions of schools and school districts.
- 8.7: Get to know and be willing to truly listen to the students in our schools.

Vision for Public Education – Teaching and Learning Resources:

- 5.4: Develop partnerships with business, industries, public agencies and the community to promote shared use of services and facilities.

OCS Goal Area 3: Human Resources

Performance Objectives:

1. Acquire excellent people for all positions
2. Identify and retain high-performing faculty and staff
3. Increase focus on succession planning

Goal Area Priorities:

1. A high-performing workforce
2. A positive organizational culture
3. Capacity for future staffing needs



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

Vision for Public Education – 6.0: Human and Organizational Capital

- 6.1 Identify and recruit the most talented candidates into teacher preparation programs.
- 6.3 Collaborate with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, the Georgia Department of Education and other credentialing agencies to provide comprehensive strategies to find, grow, and keep the most talented educators.
- 6.5 Organize personnel, distribute leadership and implement processes that maximize student learning.

OCS Goal Area 4: Operations and Student Services

Performance Objectives:

1. Ensure effective and efficient operational processes
2. Ensure safe and healthy environments for students and staff
3. Develop and implement practices to support at-risk students

Goal Area Priorities:

1. Safe environment
2. Social, emotional, physical and financial support for all students
3. Accountability
4. Efficiency

Vision for Public Education – 8.0: Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy

- 8.1 Develop safe, orderly, supportive learning environments built on respect and encouragement where all individuals believe they can make a positive difference.
- 8.2 Make each school and school system an inviting place to be for students, parents, staff and the larger community.
- 8.5 Develop a culture and climate that foster innovation and responsible risk-taking.
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- 8.6 Develop school and district cultures that are sensitive and responsive to the cultural, racial, ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the communities they serve.



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

OCSS Goal Area 5: Business Services

Performance Objectives:

1. Ensure effective and efficient financial practices
2. Develop a collaborative district budgeting process
3. Maximize federal, state, local, and alternative funding sources

Goal Area Priorities

1. Fiscal responsibility and accountability
2. Put students first
3. Foster partnerships

Vision for Public Education – 9.0: Financial Resources

- 9.3: Initiate an ongoing process at the local school district level for systematically evaluating all expenditures to enable the development and adoption of budgets that are focused on district strategies for maximizing student learning.
- 9.4: Provide a high level of flexibility to local school districts in decision-making authority about the most effective strategies for the expenditure of funds to enable all students to be successful in school, coupled with appropriate methods for evaluating school and district success and for implementing positive state interventions where they are found to be needed.
- 9.6: Provide the most optimal partnership between the state and local school districts in sharing the responsibility for financial support of public education, while ensuring that disparity in local fiscal capacity does not impede the implementation of Vision Project recommendations in all Georgia districts.
- 9.7 : Provide an on-going level of state financial support for public education which, when combined with local revenue available to boards of education, makes the attainment of our Vision for Public Education in Georgia a reality and ensures its sustainability

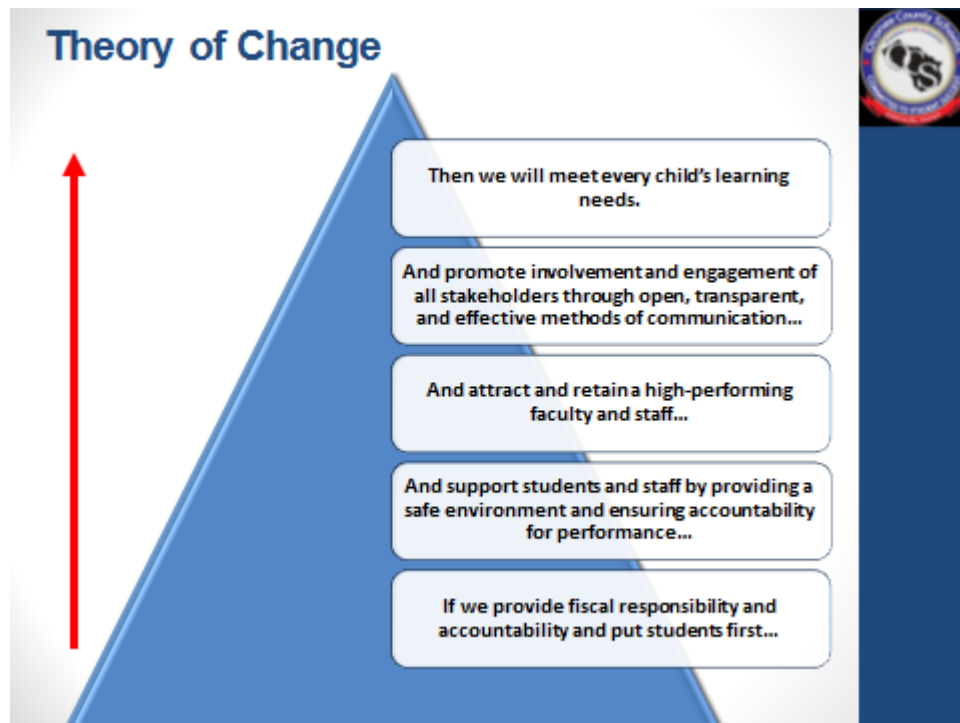
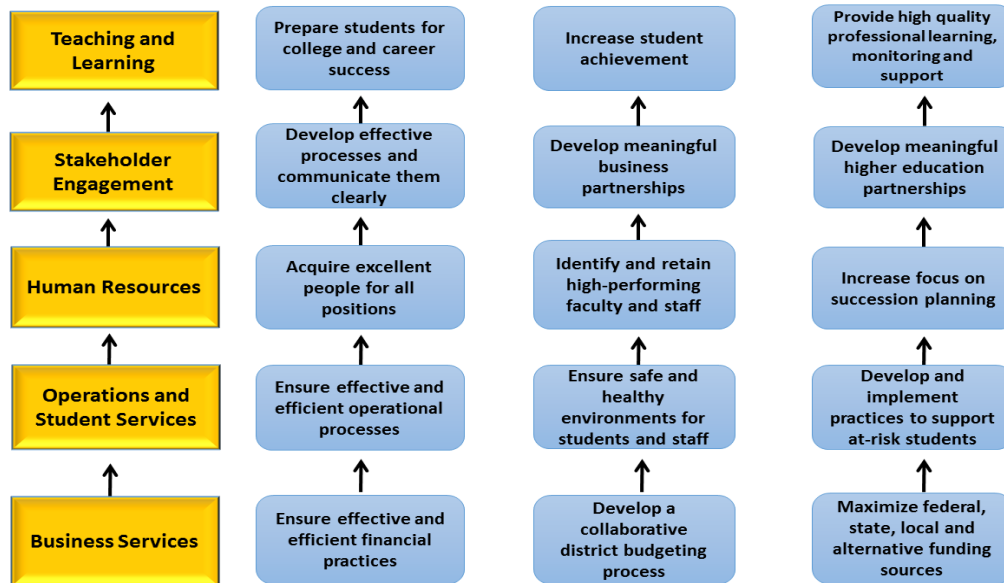


Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

Oconee County Schools Strategy Map and Theory of Change

This map shows the five Strategic Goal Areas and the 15 Performance Objectives that were developed as the framework for the Strategic Plan. A strategy is a series of aligned steps or actions intended to help you reach a desired result while a strategy map is a visual representation of an organizations high level strategy to reach its vision for the future. The Theory of Change captures the essence of the five goal areas and links with the preceding and succeeding goal areas.

Oconee County Schools Strategy Map





Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

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- **Performance objectives:** identifies what must be accomplished in order for the district to execute our strategy and achieve desired results
- **Performance measures and targets:** monitors progress toward meeting performance objectives and implementation of the organizational strategy
- **Initiatives:** explains how the system will address improving the desired performance
- **Action steps:** communicates what the district will specifically do to meet the established targets

The performance objectives, measures, targets, initiatives and action steps will be reviewed and annually and presented to the Board of Education as information items.

Strategic Improvement Planning Pyramid





Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

Timeline

June, 2012 – December, 2012:	Advanced internal review process: OCS identified the need for a strategic plan
January 23, 2013:	Board of Education (BOE) retreat: The Georgia School Board Association (GSBA) facilitated training on strategic planning
February 24 – 27, 2013:	Advanced external review visit: External Review Team validated the need for a strategic plan with a required action
February, 2013 – July, 2013:	Exploration of various models for strategic planning: OCS decided to partner with GSBA and the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI)
August 21, 2013:	OCS held initial planning meeting with GSBA and GLISI
September 24, 2013	GSBA facilitated community strategic planning event that was attended by 260 + people
September 25, 2013 – October 15, 2013:	OCS surveyed stakeholders
November 6 - 7, 2013:	GSBA and GLISI facilitated strategic planning team meeting with 30 participants: participants included teachers, students, parents, community members, school leaders, district leaders, superintendent, and BOE chair
January 9, 2014 & February, 27, 2014:	GLISI facilitated strategic action team meetings: participants included district leaders, school leaders, and superintendent
January, 2014 – March, 2014:	Action team developed measurable goals, initiatives, and action steps
March, 2014:	OCS shared the action team work with the planning team for input
April, 2014:	Superintendent recommended and BOE approved beliefs, mission, vision, motto, goal areas, performance objectives, priorities, and strategy map
May, 2014:	BOE reviewed measures, initiatives, and actions as an informational item



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

June, 2014:	Strategic plan was posted on eBOARD and OCS began implementation of plan
June, 2014 – September, 2014:	Schools created school improvement plans based on system strategic plan Budget priorities aligned to system strategic plan
Annually	Review mission, vision, beliefs Review and update measures, targets, action steps, and initiatives

Participants

Community Meeting Facilitators:

1. Angela Londono-McConnell, AK Counseling, President
2. Chuck Horton, Athens Downtown Development Authority, Parking Director
3. Cindy Haddon, Walton EMC, Marketing Specialist
4. David Gattie, UGA, Engineering Professor
5. EJ Hovell, Georgia Center- UGA Hotel and Conference Center, Director of Sales
6. Jackie Elsner, Oconee County Library, Head Librarian
7. Jim Luken, Retired, Former Mayor of Watkinsville
8. John Laster, The Laster Law Firm, LLC
9. Ken Wells, TMC Rehab, Business Development Director
10. Kenneth Mann, Bank South
11. Kevin J. Daniel, Bethel Baptist Church, Pastor
12. Marisa Grant, Former OCS Teacher
13. Marvin Nunnally, Touch Management Group, President/CEO
14. Melissa Lord, Parent
15. Pat Berger, OARC, Mentor Director
16. Rubilen Norris, United Way, Director
17. Scott Beaver, The Beaver Agency, Owner
18. Sheila Jackson, Action, Inc.
19. Tammy Gilland, Athens Regional Foundation, Vice President

Planning Team Members:

1. Dr. Jason Branch, Superintendent
2. Tom Odom, Board Chair
3. Dr. Claire Miller, Chief Academic Officer
4. Dr. Brook Whitmire, Chief Human Resources Officer
5. Jake Grant, Chief Operations Officer
6. Dan Smith, Chief Financial Officer
7. Richard Coleman, Assessment Director
8. Laura Mason, RBES Assistant Principal
9. Amy Perry, MBMS Principal



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

10. Lisa Vaughn, OCHS Assistant Principal
11. Bill Nelson, CFES Teacher
12. Donna Gast, OCMS Teacher
13. Miriam Ledford-Lyle, NOHS Teacher
14. John McGahee, OCHS Student
15. Will Boatwright, NOHS Student
16. Debi Huckaby, HSES Parent Representative
17. Caroline Lewis, HSES Parent Representative
18. Steve Miller, OCMS, OCES Parent Representative
19. Melissa Lord, OCHS Parent Representative
20. Susan Brodrick, CFES Parent Representative
21. Lora Clausen, MBES Parent Representative
22. Jay Daniel, NOHS Parent Representative
23. Monica Cruz Gutierrez, NOHS, MBES, MBMS Parent Representative
24. Steven Brooks, OCPS Parent Representative
25. Whitney Webb, OCPS Parent Representative
26. Ken Wells, RBES Parent Representative
27. Ilyana Dixon, Community/Business Representative
28. Marvin Nunnally, Community/Business Representative
29. Tammy Gilland, Community/Business Representative
30. Scott Beaver, Community/Business Representative
31. Franklin Shumake, Community/Business Representative
32. Scott Miller, Community/Business Representative
33. Mark Benson, Community/Business Representative

Action Team Members:

Goal Area 1: Teaching and Learning

1. Claire Miller, Chief Academic Officer
2. Scott Gordon, Secondary/CTAE Director
3. Lisa Daniel, Elementary Director
4. Richard Coleman, Assessment Director
5. Ashley Templeton, Assistant Principal OCES
6. Meri Blackburn, Assistant Principal NOHS
7. Suzanne Miller, Principal OCMS

Goal Area 2: Stakeholder Engagement

1. Jason Branch, Superintendent
2. Shannon Hammond, Federal Programs Director
3. Suzanne Korngold, Special Education Director
4. Mike Hale, Technology Director
5. Philip Brown, Principal NOHS
6. Laura Mason, Assistant Principal RBES



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report

Goal Area 3: Human Resources

1. Brook Whitmire, Chief Human Resources Officer
2. Keith Carter, Principal – CFES
3. Donna Cain, Human Resources Coordinator
4. Dallas LeDuff, Assistant Principal OCMS
5. Lisa Vaughn, Assistant Principal OCHS
6. Jennifer Adams, Assistant Principal HSES

Goal Area 4: Operations and Student Services

1. Jake Grant, Chief Operations Officer
2. Lucho Varela, Student Services Director
3. Susan Elsner, School Nutrition Program Director
4. Duane Peterson, Transportation Director
5. Julie Patrick, Principal OCPS
6. Susan Stancil, Assistant Principal MBMS
7. Kevin McCage, Network Specialist

Goal Area 5: Business Services

1. Dan Smith, Chief Financial Officer
2. Patti McDonald, Payroll Manager
3. Sharon Thaxton, Accounts Payable Manager
4. Amy Perry, Principal MBMS
5. Sheila Beckham, Principal OCHS
6. Andrea Roper, Principal MBES

GSBA and GLISI Facilitators:

1. Tony Arasi, GSBA Director of Board Development
2. Mary Anne Charron, GLISI Chief Program Officer
3. Dr. Stan DeJarnett, Executive Director, Vision for Public Education in Georgia Project
4. Laura Reilly, GSBA Public Relations

Gina Hernandez provides administrative assistance for the strategic planning work and enters the plan in SIMBLI (formerly called eBOARD).