



Oconee County Schools Strategic Plan Report 2019-2024

Strategic Improvement Planning Executive Summary

April 25, 2019

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 new five-year 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 reviewing the mission, vision, beliefs, goal areas and elements of the strategic improvement plan
- A facilitated process to work with experts within the district on developing initiatives and action steps to implement the plan

Continuous Improvement Model





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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.

Phase I:

Community Engagement: In September, 2018, the strategic improvement planning process began with a community engagement session that involved approximately 400 representatives from all stakeholder groups. OCS also provided a stakeholder survey to gather vital input from the community and received 267 responses to the online survey.

Planning Team: In November, 2018 a group of 38 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 developing strategic goal areas, performance objectives, and a strategy map for the strategic improvement plan.

Action Teams: In January, February, and March, 2019 four teams totaling 29 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 finalized 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?”.

Phase II:

In April, 2019 the Chief Academic Officer will present the four goal areas, performance objectives, and the strategy map components of the strategic improvement plan to the board as an action item. The Superintendent will recommend that the Board of Education approve the four goal areas, performance objectives, and the strategy map.

In May, 2019 the Chief Academic Officer will present the performance 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.



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In November, 2018 the planning team reviewed the belief statements, 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 Initiatives Aligned to *The Georgia Vision Project*

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

The Georgia 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?



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Through answering these questions, the Georgia 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 Georgia 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 four Strategic Goal Areas that were vetted and slightly refined to ensure consistency in the wording.

- 1. Teaching and Learning
- 2. Culture and Climate
- 3. Community Engagement and Partnerships
- 4. Operations

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

OCS Goal Area 1: Teaching and Learning

Performance Objectives:

- 1. Improve student achievement and growth
- 2. Prepare students for postsecondary and workforce options
- 3. Provide high-quality professional learning

Goal Area Initiatives:

- 1. Job embedded professional learning
- 2. College and career opportunities
- 3. Literacy across all content areas
- 4. Coherent instructional system
- 5. Data used to inform instructional practices



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Georgia 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.

Georgia 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.

OCS Goal Area 2: Culture and Climate

Performance Objectives:

1. Support the well-being of students
2. Create and maintain inclusive and student-centered environments

Goal Area Initiatives:

1. Advisement curriculum
2. Behavior frameworks
3. Community involvement
4. Safety and security

Georgia 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.



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OCS Goal Area 3: Community Engagement and Partnerships

Performance Objectives:

1. Increase meaningful partnerships with business, nonprofit, and higher education
2. Increase family engagement
3. Improve effectiveness of communication and branding

Goal Area Initiatives:

1. Partners in education program
2. Parent/teacher conferences
3. Family outreach program
4. Itslearning parent portal

Georgia 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.

Georgia 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 4: Operations

Performance Objectives:

1. Ensure safe, efficient, and effective learning environments
2. Acquire, support, and retain high-performing staff
3. Proactively address district growth
4. Ensure continued stewardship of resources through effective and efficient practices

Goal Area Initiatives:

1. Operational processes
2. Ensure safe and healthy learning environments for all students and staff
3. Human Resources training sessions
4. Data used to examine district growth
5. Ensure effective and efficient financial processes
6. Budget process



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Georgia Vision for Public Education – 3.0: Early Learning and Student Success

- 3.6 Ensure adequate financial support for the implementation of quality programs for all young children.

Georgia 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.

Georgia Vision for Public Education – 9.0: Financial Resources

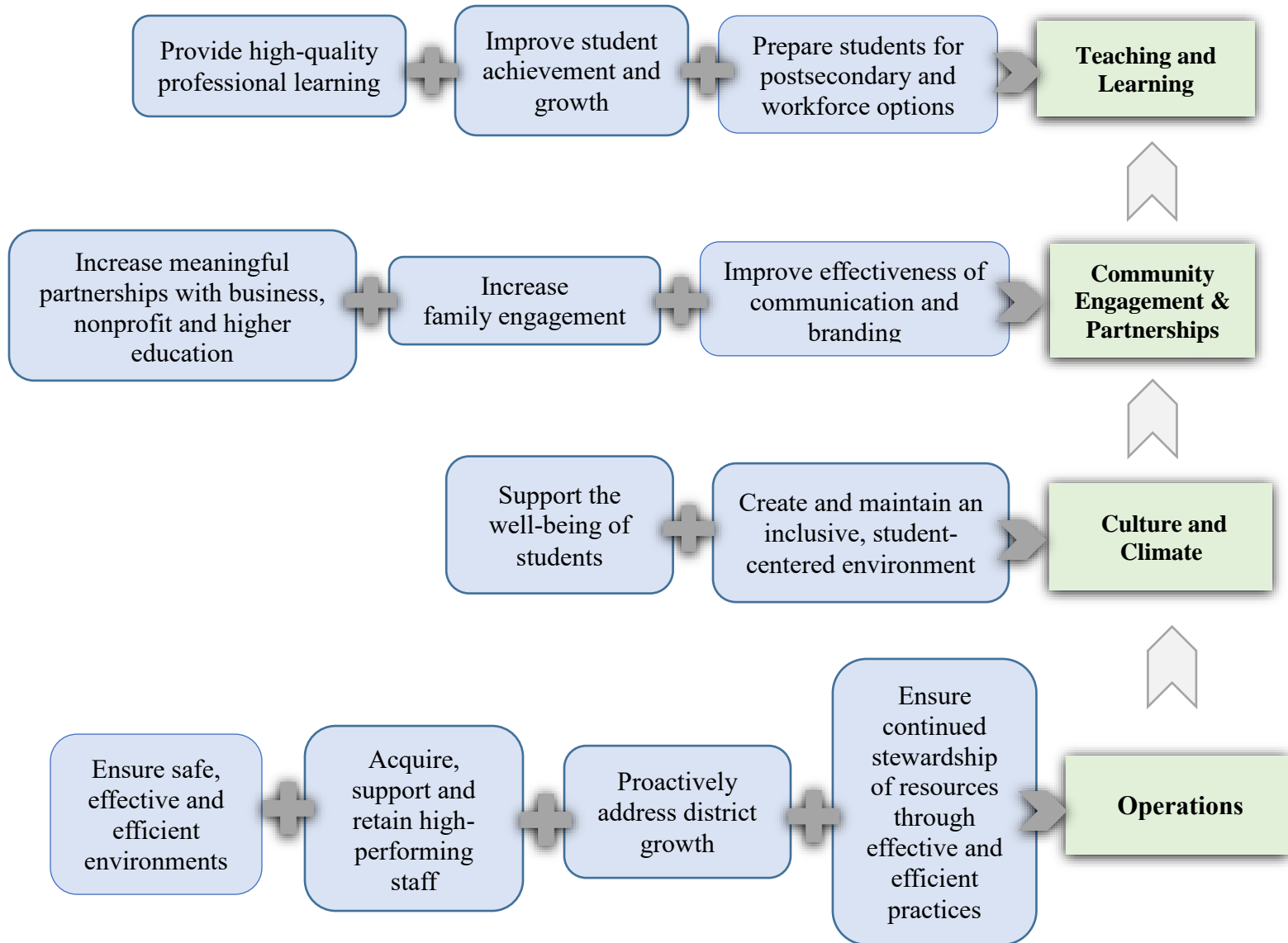
- 9.3 Initiate an ongoing process at the local school district level for systemically evaluating all expenditures to enable the development and adoption of budgets that are focused on district strategies for maximizing student learning.
- 9.4: Provide a high level of flexibility to local school districts 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 Strategy Map

This map shows the four Strategic Goal Areas and the 12 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.



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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



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- **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





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Timeline

January, 2017 – December, 2017:	AdvancED internal review process: OCS identified the need for a strategic plan
February 25 – 28, 2018:	AdvancED external review visit: External Review Team validated the need for a strategic plan with a required action
August 22, 2018:	OCS held initial planning meeting with GSBA and GLISI
September 18, 2018	GSBA facilitated community strategic planning event that was attended by 400 people
September 19, 2018 – October 7, 2018:	OCS surveyed stakeholders
November 1 - 2, 2018:	GSBA facilitated strategic planning team meeting with 41 participants: participants included teachers, students, parents, community members, school leaders, district leaders, superintendent, and BOE chair
January 30-31 2019:	GLISI facilitated strategic action team meetings: participants included district leaders, school leaders, and superintendent
January, 2019 – March, 2019:	Action team developed measurable goals, initiatives, and action steps
April, 2019:	Superintendent recommends BOE approval goal areas, performance objectives, and strategy map
May, 2019:	BOE reviews measures, initiatives, and actions as an informational item
June, 2019:	Strategic plan is posted on SIMBLI and OCS began implementation of plan
June, 2019 – September, 2019:	Schools create 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



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Participants

Community Meeting Facilitators:

1. Cara Karnes, Oconee County Library
2. Tammy Gilland, Piedmont Athens Regional Hospital
3. Melissa Lord, Lord and Stephens Funeral Home
4. Marion Butler, Synovus Bank
5. Rita Bryant, Retired Teacher
6. Elizabeth Hovell, University of Georgia
7. Nathan Bartlett, Georgia Power
8. Ryan Hawk, Peach State Credit Union
9. Jeff Faulkner, Zaxby's
10. Lora Clausen, Parent
11. Courtney Bernardi, Oconee Chamber
12. Angela Londono-McConnell, AK Counseling and Consulting
13. Amanda Davis, Oconee Area Resource Council
14. Cindy Haddon, Walton EMC
15. Cyndee Moore, University of North Georgia
16. Deesha Hagwood, Oconee State Bank
17. Kay Keller, University of North Georgia
18. Marisa Grant, Retired Principal
19. Sayge Medlin, Parent
20. Kenneth Mann, Bank South
21. Angel Jackson,
22. Corie Dimitroff

Planning Team Members:

1. Dr. Jason Branch, Superintendent
2. Amy Parish, Board Member
3. Tim Burgess, Board Member
4. Dr. Claire Buck, Chief Academic Officer
5. Dr. Brook Whitmire, Chief Human Resources Officer
6. Saranna Charping, Chief Financial Officer
7. Anisa Sullivan Jimenez, Director of Communications
8. Jake Grant, Director of Facilities
9. Donna Cain, Director of Human Resources
10. Keith Carter, OCMS Principal
11. Dr. Susan Stancil, DCES Principal
12. Dr. Philip Brown, NOHS Principal
13. Amy Arnold, Teacher of the Year
14. Soraia Felgenhauer, OCES Assistant Principal
15. Cedrita Brown, CFES Paraprofessional
16. Sydney Bell, NOHS Student
17. Jacob Zipperer, OCHS Student
18. Rohan Patel, OCES Student



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19. Claudia Bates, RBES Student
20. Clay Dunagan, OMS Student
21. Laney Lyle, MBMS Student
22. Amanda Davis, Oconee Area Resource Council
23. Courtney Bernardi, Oconee Chamber of Commerce
24. Cindy Haddon, Walton EMC
25. Tammy Gilland, Piedmont Regional First Care
26. Brian Brodrick, Jackson Spalding
27. Kevin Daniel, Bethel Baptist Church
28. Lorie Peterson, BankSouth
29. Amrey Harden, Community
30. Katie Lawson, CFES Parent
31. Chris Owens, DCES Parent
32. Mike Isaac, HSES Parent
33. Gavin Hassemmer, MBES Parent
34. Steve Nugent, OCES Parent
35. Rupal Patel, OCPS Parent
36. Melissa Chafin, RBES Parent
37. Tammy Rumpf, MBMS Parent
38. Melanie Jenkins, NOHS Parent
39. Christi Donahue, OCHS Parent

Action Team Members:

Goal Area 1: Teaching and Learning

1. Dr. Claire Buck, Chief Academic Officer: Goal Area Leader
2. Amy Perry, Director of Secondary Education
3. Jennifer Adams, Director of Elementary Education
4. Dr. Susan Stancil, DCES Principal
5. Dr. Katherine Brown, CFES Assistant Principal
6. Eric Hamilton, NOHS Assistant Principal
7. Kim Harmelink, OCHS Assistant Principal
8. Dr. Meri Blackburn, MBMS Principal

Goal Area 2: Culture and Climate

1. Dallas LeDuff, Director of Student Services: Goal Area Leader
2. Richard Coleman, Director of Assessment
3. Suzanne Korngold, Director of Special Education
4. Dr. Philip Brown, NOHS Principal
5. Soraia Felgenhsuer, OCES Assistant Principal



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6. Kristin Harrison, OCMS Assistant Principal
7. Sara Johnson, OCPS Assistant Principal

Goal Area 3: Community Engagement and Partnerships

1. Anisa Sullivan Jimenez, Director of Communications: Goal Area Leader
2. Dr. Jason Branch, Superintendent
3. Beth Parks, Director of CTAE and Federal Programs
4. Dr. Mike Hale, Director of Technology
5. Keith Carter, OCMS Principal
6. Jennifer Haygood, MBES Principal
7. Laura Mason, RBES Principal

Goal Area 4: Operations

1. Saranna Charping, Chief Financial Officer: Goal Area Leader
2. Dr. Brook Whitmire, Chief Human Resources Officer
3. Brock Toole, Chief Operations Officer
4. Jake Grant, Director of Facilities
5. Mike Eddy, HSES Principal
6. Kevin Yancey, OCHS Assistant Principal
7. Donna Cain, Director of Human Resources

GSBA Facilitators:

1. Dr. Stan DeJarnett, Director of The Georgia Vision Project for Public Education
2. Lynita Jackson, Strategic Planning Services and Vision Project Manager

GLISI Facilitators:

1. Dr. Jennie Welch, Vice President of Strategy and Finance
2. Dr. Patty Heitmuller, Senior Program Director
3. Dr. Will Rumbaugh, GLISI Consultant
4. Dr. Sue Myers, GLISI Consultant