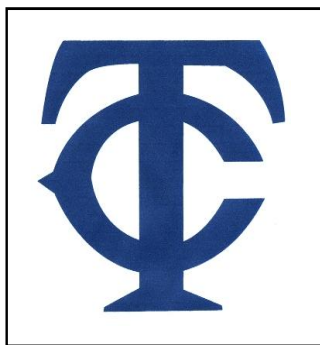


Tattnall County School District

Strategic Improvement Planning Report

March 24, 2014



“Whatever It Takes”

GSBA

GLISI Georgia Leadership Institute
for School Improvement

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Strategic Improvement Planning Executive Summary

The Board of Education of the Tattnall County School District voted to use a process developed by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) to develop an updated strategic improvement plan for the school district. This comprehensive process engaged the community and all stakeholder groups to create universal ownership and support for district 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



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. The entire process usually takes 8-10 months to complete and is divided into the following phases.

Phase I

Community Engagement: In September 2013, the strategic improvement planning process began with a community engagement session, involving representatives from all stakeholder groups and a stakeholder survey to gather vital input from the community.

Planning Team: In November 2013, a group of 24 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 include 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 December 2013, three smaller teams totaling 18 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 began to look at the initiatives and action steps that might be needed 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 January 2014, the Action Teams delivered a report of their work back to the Planning Team. The planning team reviewed the action team’s work, discussed priorities, implications and made recommendations for additions or changes that might be needed.

Phase II

Tattnall County Strategic Plan brought to the Board of Education: In March 2014, the Superintendent presents the strategic improvement plan to the board. The board reviews the report and votes to approve the plan for 2014 – 2017.

Board and Staff: Once the board has adopted the work of the Planning and Action Teams, specific initiatives, and action steps necessary to execute the plan will be investigated and/or implemented as necessary. These initiatives will be investigated and/or implemented at the board, district, school (School Improvement Plans) and community levels.

Phase III

Alignment: The plan initiatives and action steps will be aligned to the districts and school budgets, as well as board, superintendent and leader evaluations. Additionally, school improvement plans and other system action plans will be aligned with the new strategic improvement plan.

Phase IV

Execution, Monitoring and Reporting: After alignment of the plan, district and school staff in conjunction with the board will execute, monitor, and report on the plan as well as ensure an ongoing process to review and update the plan as needed.

Tattnall County Schools' Commitment to Ongoing Process: Action Team performance measures and suggested initiatives/action steps have been documented for follow-up. These suggested initiatives/action steps are not inclusive of school-based initiatives that may be developed to support and meet specific established goals. In keeping with the school district's philosophy, there will be continued focus on systemic processes and goals to improve the district, but differentiated models are encouraged at the local school levels. Where needed, a task force will be created to further explore suggested system level strategies and initiatives. School-based governance and leadership teams are in place to foster the development of appropriate action items in support of school-based initiatives to support and meet specific established goals, performance measures and strategic priorities.

Strategic plan mid-year and summary updates will be provided to the Board by Action Team Leaders in December 2014 and June 2014. The Superintendent and Curriculum Director will review the school-based status of the strategic goals through the principal evaluation process currently in place. The eBOARD Strategic Plan software provides a Balanced Scorecard that reflects the Strategic Plan goals and progress.

eBOARD Strategic Plan Software: One of the most important aspects of the Strategic Improvement Planning Process is the ability of the school district to use GSBA's eBOARD Strategic Plan Software to assist with the execution, monitoring, and reporting of the plan. GSBA's eBOARD Strategic Plan Module makes the process easy for district staff and the school board. Plan items can be easily updated by staff allowing users to filter the plan by staff, department, status, priority, date, etc. As the plan is updated, results are reported on through the Strategic Dashboard, Balanced Scorecard and Goal Alignment report. eBOARD helps to keep everyone informed and provides real-time status updates of the plan in a transparent fashion.

Mission, Vision & Beliefs

Mission

The Tattnall County School District is committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure a quality education that affirms ALL students' value and worth and will lead to high school graduation and productive citizenship.

Vision

The Tattnall County School District will utilize innovative strategies to ensure ALL students will be successful today and prepared for tomorrow.

Beliefs

In Tattnall County Schools, we believe:

- Schools should maintain a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment;
- Education is the shared responsibility of the school, home, and community;
- Schools should provide a rigorous and relevant curriculum;
- Each student should meet or exceed educational standards in order to reach his/her highest potential;
- Instructional decisions should be driven by accurate and relevant data;
- All students are unique learners and should be provided differentiated instruction;
- The use of technology should be seamlessly incorporated into the standards based curriculum;
- The system should employ and retain highly qualified personnel;
- All individuals have worth and value;
- Schools should promote sound character and national pride in all students;
- Schools should continually and systematically evaluate and revise programs to meet the changing needs of learners;
- Stakeholder involvement is essential to the success of students and the school system.

Strategic Goal Areas and Performance Objectives

Goal Area I – Attaining High Achievement and Success

- Increase student mastery of curriculum
- Support student success

Goal Area II – Building Positive Relationships

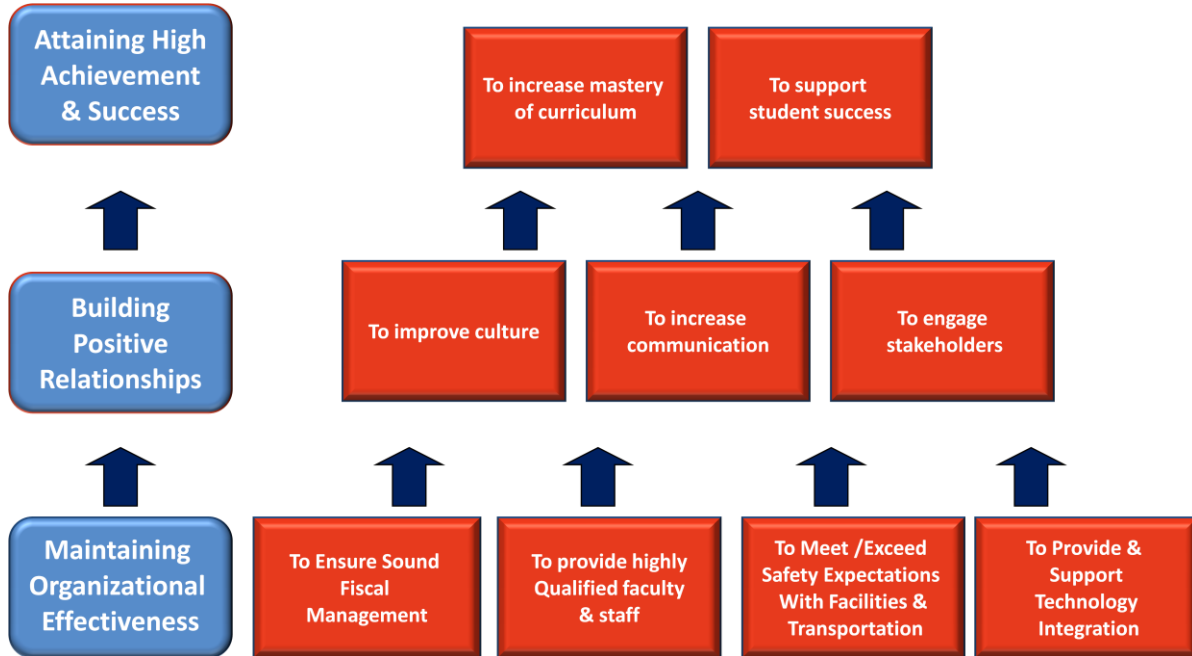
- Improve culture
- Engage stakeholders

Goal Area III – Maintaining organizational effectiveness

- Provide an adequate number of highly qualified faculty and staff
- Meet or exceed all expectations with facilities and transportation
- Provide and support technology integration
- Ensure sound fiscal management in all programs

Tattnall County School District

Strategy Map



Tattnall County Schools Cause and Effect Strategy Statement

If we maintain organizational effectiveness and build positive relationships, then all of our students will be productive citizens

Strategic Improvement Plan Detail

Strategic Goal Area I: Attaining High Achievement & Success

Goal Area Priorities:

- ❖ Technology
- ❖ Subgroups

Performance Objective I.A – Increase student mastery of curriculum

Initiative I.A. and Action Steps:

I.A.a. - Curriculum Initiative

- Schedule vertical/horizontal content planning meetings
- Conduct semester curriculum and unit revision meetings

I.A.b. - Assessment Initiative

- Provide common assessments
- Conduct common assessment revision meetings each semester
- Provide leadership updates on assessments each semester
- Develop SLOs

I.A.c. – Standards-based Instruction Initiative

- Conduct instructional walkthroughs
 - Standards-based instruction
 - Technology integration
- Analyze implementation data from TKES
- Create an annual scope of work for school leaders
- Identify resources and interventions appropriate for learners

Performance Objective I.B – To support student success

Initiative I.B. and Action Steps:

I.B.a. – Advisement Initiative

- Provide support systems for students
- Implement vertical transition activities
- Monitor failure rate
- Develop appropriate remedial/recovery opportunities
- Examine attendance protocols

I.B.b. – Career Awareness Initiative

- Provide career awareness lessons, activities and courses
- Monitor student pathway completion progress via tracking sheet

Strategic Goal Area II: Building Positive Relationships

Goal Area Priorities:

- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Internal and External Relationships

Performance Objective II.A – To improve culture

Initiative II.A. and Action Steps:

II.A.a. – Recognition initiative

- Select TOTY annually
- Develop staff recognition plan
- Continue student recognition plan

II.A.b. – Environment Initiative

- Conduct customer service training for classified staff annually

- Develop school environment (grounds/building)
- Improvement plan to promote aesthetics

II.A.c. – Public Relations Initiative

- Share and update “Whatever it takes” presentation annually
- Display motto on all forms of communication continuously

Performance Objective II.B – To engage stakeholders

Initiative II.B. and Action Steps:

II.B.a. – District parent participation

- Review and/or revise parent involvement plan annually
- Produce parent information brochures/pamphlets/handouts
- Coordinate with family connections

II.B.b. – Student Attendance Initiative

- Update and revise as necessary district attendance protocol
- Monitor attendance on Power School monthly

II.B.c. – Staff Attendance

- Develop incentive plan to promote staff attendance
- Implement staff recognition activities

II.B.d. – Communication

- Survey Staff annually
- Superintendent makes presentations to civic groups annually
- Use auto-dialer to notify parent regarding activities
- Encourage use of district website by advertising continuously in local newspapers, local radio station
- Inform public of school safety plan

Strategic Goal Area III: Maintaining Organizational Effectiveness

Goal Area Priorities:

- ❖ Local, state and federal regulations
- ❖ Funding

Performance Objective III.A – To provide an adequate number of highly qualified faculty and staff

Initiative III.A. and Action Steps:

III.A.a. – Evaluation Initiative

- Discover staffing needs; develop recruitment plan
- Analyze application process
- Hire highly qualified staff – train leaders on criteria of highly qualified staff
- Update Title IIA Equity Plan and implement
- Continue to post vacancies on various sources; build relationships with accrediting institutions
- Train SNP staff on Serv-Safe

III.A.b. – Leadership Initiative

- Develop roadmap for professional development of SNP personnel
- Develop transportation professional development
- Implement LKES/TKES
- Participate in GLISI for leadership training
- Provide departmental professional development opportunities

Performance Objective III.B – To meet or exceed all expectations with facilities and transportation

Initiative III.B. and Action Steps:

III.B.a. – School Facility Initiative

- Update on School Safety Plans and implement, including review of “cheat sheets”

- Administer Spring safe school surveys
- Perform safety drills
- Perform school facility safety inspections

III.B.b. – Transportation Initiative

- Perform student bus safety and evacuation training/drills
- Conduct all bus inspections
- Complete annual personnel job requirements per state/local policy
- Collect and analyze bus rider participation twice yearly

Performance Objective III.C – To provide and support technology integration

Initiative III.C. and Action Steps:

III.C.a. – Technology Initiative

- Complete annual technology inventory
- Update Technology Plan and identify needs
- Upgrade district infrastructure
- Increase student access to technology
- Increase use of online content and web resources for expanded learning opportunities
- Provide technology training to instructional staff

Performance Objective III.D – To ensure sound fiscal management in all programs

Initiative III.D. and Action Steps:

III.D.a. - Financial Initiative

- Provide monthly financial reports and budget comparisons
- Review and revise both federal and state budgets & local budgets
- Internal audits conducted on all accounts

III.D.b. - School Nutrition program

- Enhance equipment by developing and implementing a replacement schedule
- Professional development
- Educate stakeholders on SNP Quality/Production through public relations measures

III.D.c. - Transportation

- Collect data (ex. Mileage, time logs, number of pickups, etc.) and analyze by route efficiency twice yearly

Appendix I: Participants

Planning Team Members

Elizabeth Love
Lynn McArthur
Ken Murphy
Zuber Malek
Kristi Kaiser
Tisha Holland
Chris Freeman
Staci Robinson
Bethany Durrence
Tina Debevec
Jessica Dubberly
Sandra Spikes
Glenn Stewart
Jackie Trim
Lisa Trim
Carla Waters
Cindy Boyett
Gwenda Johnson
Gina Williams
Brandon Johnson

Action Team Members

Attaining High Achievement & Success

Dr. Carla Waters, Chair
Gina G. Williams
Adam Kirby
Nick Tatum
Ken Murphy
Christy Tatum
Lisa Tyler
Ginger Thompson
Glenn Stewart

Building Positive Relationships

Mrs. Lisa Trim, Chair
Shaquila Foreman
Tisha Holland
Tina Debevec
Jessica Dutton

Maintaining Organizational Effectiveness

Dr. Jeannie Burkhalter, Chair
Angie Costen
Lynna Hilliard
Robin Waters
Debbie Powell

Appendix II: Input

Tattnall County School System Community Engagement Session

Community Conversation - September 16, 2013

Online Survey - September 16 - October 7, 2013

Prepared by: Laura D. Reilly, Georgia School Boards Association

To assist the Strategic Planning Team with their work, the Tattnall County School System engaged its community in a process to gauge the thoughts, feelings and perceptions that stakeholders hold regarding the district - before the plan was developed.

The engagement initiative, designed and implemented by the Georgia School Boards Association, included a community conversation and an online survey. A genuine effort was made to make the process as inclusive and transparent as possible.

Participants of the community engagement initiative responded to the following questions:

1. To be the best it can be, what should the Tattnall County School System preserve/keep?
2. To be the best it can be, what should the Tattnall County School System change/do differently?
3. As a community, what do we want our public schools to provide for students?
4. What do you think are the top challenges faced by the Tattnall County School System?
5. What do you think are the top challenges faced by the students in the Tattnall County School System?

The intention of this report is to provide a collection of the best thinking of school and community members regarding the five questions presented. The information gathered is qualitative and seeks to focus attention on those areas that generated the most energy. Members of the strategic planning team will use the input to assist them in developing a plan to move the district forward and one that is reflective of its community.

The Format

Community Forum

During August 2013, the district worked to recruit participants to attend the community engagement session. A great deal of effort went into inviting all segments of the community. Notices were distributed in the paper, on the district's website, through school announcements and at meetings throughout the district.

At the community forum on September 16 at Tattnall County High School, about 100 participants heard a presentation on the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) strategic planning process and a "State of the District" presentation by Dr. Gina Williams, Tattnall County superintendent. Information included: educational issues, school district achievement data and the process to be followed that evening regarding the small group discussions. Participants were randomly divided into smaller groups and assigned classrooms in which to hold their conversation. Volunteer facilitators, who were not employees of the school district, agreed to lead the discussions, clarify issues, keep each group focused, make sure every person had an opportunity to be heard, and ensure that what was said was properly recorded.

Facilitators did not ascribe any individual's name to comments written in the notes of the small group discussions. At the conclusion of the discussion, facilitators asked participants to prioritize their lists of comments by marking the ideas or comments they thought were most important for each question asked.

GSBA staff transcribed all of the notes. Laura Reilly compiled the report by sorting the comments and using the results of each group's prioritizing activity. Results of the community conversation were synthesized with the results of the online survey.

Online Survey

An online survey using the same questions offered an additional input opportunity. If they desired to do so, participants could provide additional comments on all questions and on the survey as a whole. The choices listed for questions were used only to add structure to the survey and avoid ending up with lists of comments in no order or context. Zoomerang was used as the online survey tool. Open-ended comments were sorted through a manual process. GSBA administered the survey.

The Response

About 100 community members, teachers, students and staff participated in the community forum. There were 98 full responses to the online survey. The largest percentage of respondents to the online survey identified themselves as parents (49%). The next group with the largest number of participants was the teacher group (21 %). Attendees of the community forum were not asked to identify themselves, but facilitators indicated that for most of the groups, there was a good mix of parents, teachers and staff.

Reasons to be Proud and Assets to Build Upon

When asked, "To be the best it can be, what should the Tattnall County School System preserve/keep?" the following represents the areas of greatest agreement among survey respondents and/or community conversation participants:

- 1) Technology - Technology was frequently noted at the community conversation. Stakeholders cited the use of technology to communicate with parents regarding their child's performance. Note: This overlaps into the communications and parental involvement areas. Participants also noted the challenge involved in getting more parents and teachers to use the tools available to them.
- 2) Teachers and staff - Stakeholders are proud of the teachers and staff in the district. Many comments reflected appreciation for what they do and concern that the district continually work to retain highly qualified teachers.
- 3) Small schools, small town atmosphere of schools - Participants of the community conversation talked about their pride in Tattnall County and that having smaller schools allows for more community spirit. One group noted that they realize smaller schools cost the district more money.
- 4) Safety - Issues surrounding providing a safe, orderly environment generated a great deal of discussion and agreement among participants of the community conversation as well as the online survey. Stakeholders are concerned about the safety of students and staff. They recognize and appreciate what is being done in this regard, but also feel safety needs to remain a focus and priority for all levels of administration. Comments in this area include issues such as discipline, having a police/security officer presence at schools, bus monitoring and bullying.
- 5) Small class sizes - This is another example of an issue crossing over into other areas. Stakeholders want to keep class sizes small where that is already the case, and focus on finding ways to decrease class sizes in the future.
- 6) Student achievement - The current focus on student achievement and improving the lives of children are important issues to stakeholders. They also recognize the challenges associated with doing this (funding).

Possibilities for Change and Growth

When asked, "To be the best it can be, what should the Tattnall County School System change or do differently?" the following represents the areas of greatest agreement among survey respondents and community conversation participants:

- 1) Curriculum issues - Stakeholders at the community conversation and on the survey cited the need for a curriculum that is rigorous, but includes opportunities for students to learn more about different professions, life skills such as personal finance and to have opportunities for vocational training and dual enrollment. There were also a number of comments about needing to stay with one curriculum and not make so many changes so quickly. There is an expressed desire for additional and a diverse array of courses and programs such as fine arts, sports and extracurricular activities.
- 2) Parental involvement - Stakeholders at the community conversation and on the survey expressed deep concern about the need for increased parental support. Stakeholders believe there is a need to do more to include parents of minority students. They also believe that parents need support and training in how to help their children with academics.
- 3) Small class sizes - As noted above, stakeholders support smaller class sizes and consistency in class size policies across the district.
- 4) Field trips - There was a lot of discussion about the need to provide Tattnall County students with cultural experiences outside of the county. This comes up again as a core element of the education program that stakeholders want to provide for students.

What the Community Wants the District to Provide Students

Several themes emerged from the respondents of the online survey and the participants at the community conversation:

- One theme emerged as a major focus for stakeholders at the community conversation and on the survey. They expressed a strong desire for a curriculum that includes college *and* career preparation. Vocational education, exposure to different careers, life skills such as personal finance and the need for more electives were cited as examples of what stakeholders want the district to provide for students.

- Field trips - Again, stakeholders expressed concern that Tattnall County students aren't getting enough exposure to "life outside of Tattnall County." Inviting guest speakers to the district was one suggestion.
- A safe, secure learning environment is important to stakeholders.
- A number of groups at the community conversation brought up the need for a nurse at the high school.

Top Challenges Faced by the School District

The following are issues that surfaced most often through the online survey and the community conversation:

- Stakeholders overwhelmingly recognize the financial and funding challenges the district faces.
- The challenge of how to get more parents involved in their child's education was cited by a number of groups at the community conversation and on the survey.
- Stakeholders cited a number of community issues that create a challenge for the district including a lack of well-paying jobs, the economy in general, poverty and apathy towards public education.

Top Challenges Faced by the Students

The following are issues that surfaced most often through the online survey and the community conversation:

- Too many changes to the curriculum, the pace of instruction and the difficulty of the new curriculum were cited as major challenges for students.
- The need for more parental involvement was cited numerous times as a challenge for students.
- Believing in the importance of education and apathy create major challenges for many students.
- Negative peer pressure, drug use and teen pregnancy were cited by numerous groups as major challenges for students.

Other Issues That Surfaced

The following are issues that surfaced in different ways at the community conversation and on the survey:

- Mental health services for students - In a number of different ways, stakeholders expressed concern that students need additional emotional and social support from the school district.
- Mentors and tutors - Mentoring and tutoring came up a number of times as ways to assist students with transitioning between grade levels and keeping up with coursework.
- Rigor - Stakeholders recognize the need for rigor in the curriculum and the challenge that presents.
- Lunch program - While many stakeholders expressed appreciation for the free lunch program, there were a number of comments about the quality and quantity of food offered.
- Size of the district and transportation - Stakeholders recognize the challenge the size of the district presents for the transportation department, but expressed the need for shorter routes and easing crowding on the buses.

1. Planning Team Stakeholder Wants and Expectations Summary

During the planning team session participants were asked to summarize the wants and expectations of the students, internal and external stakeholders of Tattnall County Schools based on the focus group and survey results?

Students	<u>Wants and Expectations</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. to learn2. want structure3. want to be appreciated4. want to be safe5. want to succeed graduate and go to college6. fun and interactive learning7. healthy amount of challenge8. success9. safety, structure10. somebody cares11. teachers with a passion for subject12. teachers who demonstrate relevance13. opinions matter – not to be put down by teacher or student14. answer to be valued15. feel encouraged16. patient (not frustrated)17. try different teaching strategies18. prepare individual learner/held accountable19. fairness20. nurturing21. to be included22. fun learning experiences23. safe and clean school/classrooms
Internal Stakeholders	<u>Wants and Expectations</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. time, resources2. success for ALL3. support – parents, admin, community (2)4. positive environment5. recognition6. community support7. feedback8. too many restrictions9. be successful10. fairness11. safe and clean environment12. support from other internal, as well as external stakeholders13. high levels of learning14. accountability for everyone15. all staff to embrace their role in the educational process16. belief in the difference a teacher makes17. teaching is a way of life18. whatever it takes

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">19. having our opinions valued20. be encouraged and valued and appreciated21. parent/community support
External Stakeholders	<p><u>Wants and Expectations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. educated students/problem solvers2. voices heard3. informed4. safe environment5. high graduation rate6. productive citizens7. ALL students can learn8. safe and clean schools9. high achieving schools10. opportunities for involvement11. to produce college and career ready students12. student accountability/taught as individual13. safe environment14. help build good character

**Tattnall County School District
Strategic Planning Report – 01/27/2014**

2. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

INTERNAL	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dedicated, caring staff 2. Strong leadership team 3. Data-driven decision-making 4. Technology 5. Safe, clean environment 6. Student:Teacher 7. Well behaved students 8. Community/Family relationships 9. Business support 10. Effective use of Title allocation 11. Good students overall 12. Good facilities 13. Supportive staff and leadership 14. Transportation 15. Meet the needs of ALL students (ESOL, SPED, Migrant, Gifted) 16. Good overall attendance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need additional support staff for technology 2. Poor graduation rate 3. Lack of field trips due to funding 4. Student and parent apathy 5. Lack of basic skills 6. Transient population 7. Chronic absenteeism 8. Cut after school program 9. Adjustments to curriculum changes (implementation) 10. Transition between schools 11. Socio-economic status 12. Achievement gap 13. Financial (normal school year)
EXTERNAL	
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community business support (DQ) 2. Partnership with Optim 3. GSU & STC 4. Telemon/Headstart 5. Work Based learning 6. CCRPI 7. New Business/Industry 8. After school programs 9. Field trips 10. Initiatives (Common Core) 11. Good public libraries (programs) 12. Business support of school programs & student needs 13. Educational (tech schools, dual enrollment, GED) 14. Social (raise family/family environment) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Home school 2. Virtual school 3. Lack of education (parents) 4. Rapid change of curriculum 5. CCRPI 6. Prisons 7. Initiatives (Common Core, home school, virtual school) 8. Economically disadvantaged (SES of community) 9. Cultural deprivation 10. Educational level of parents 11. Political (Economic – funding cuts) 12. Demographic (average educational level) 13. Social (lack of activities/resources for youth)