



Executive Summary

Tattnall County Schools

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Introduction

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school system stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school system, and the kinds of programs and services that a school system implements to support student learning.

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

Description of the School System

Describe the school system's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school system serves?

Description of the School System

Tattnall County was incorporated on December 5, 1801. It was named for Josiah Tattnall, the governor who signed the 1801 legislative act that established the region. Montgomery and Washington counties gave up part of their territories to create Tattnall County. Reidsville, the county seat, was named for Robert E Reid, a superior court judge and territorial governor of Florida.

Tattnall County is a rural county in southeast Georgia with a 2010 census population of 25,520. Its size of 488.3 square miles ranks it 33rd in Georgia giving it a population density of only 53.2 people per square mile. Nearly one-fifth of Tattnall's population, according to the 2010 census, was living in group quarters in the county's three state prisons which provide a large amount of land being used with no tax base for the school system. The poverty rate ranks in the top 10 worst in the state, although this fact is somewhat tempered by the high prisoner population. Tattnall County is an agricultural area producing poultry, pecans, corn, soybeans, and timber. Tattnall County is the largest producer of the Vidalia Sweet Onion. Tattnall County is home to the Rotary Corporation, which is the world's largest supplier of aftermarket outdoor equipment parts. Optim Medical Center, which is the regional leader in health care services, is located in the county seat of Reidsville. Tattnall County also has many small, family operated farms and businesses that provide employment opportunities.

Tattnall County is comprised of six cities - Glennville, Reidsville (County Seat), Manassas, Collins, Mendes, and Cobbtown.

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, the median household income was \$33,863, and the per capita money income was \$15,741. The population of Tattnall County is 59% white, 29% black, 11% Hispanic, and 1% other.

The Tattnall County School District is a small, rural school district with an enrollment of approximately 3600 students in grades P-12 as well as preschool special education students. The student enrollment is 53% white, 25% black, 15% Hispanic, 5% multi-racial, and 2% Asian. The Tattnall County School District consists of two elementary schools, two middle schools, one elementary/middle school combination, one high school and one alternative school. There are no private schools in Tattnall County. Approximate enrollment of each school in Tattnall County:

Tattnall County High School - Grades 9-12 - 921 TCHS also houses a prek class of 22.

Collins Elementary School - Grades Prek-5 - 335

Collins Middle School - Grades 6-8- 174

Glennville Elementary School - Grades Prek-5- 821

Glennville Middle School - Grades 6-8- 332

Reidsville Elementary School - Grades Prek-5 - 770

Reidsville Middle School - Grades 6-8- 313

All students in Tattnall County qualify for free breakfast and lunch through the Community Eligibility Option (CEO) grant for which Tattnall County applied and received. The District's direct certified percentage for free/reduced lunch is 89%. Approximately 74% of the 2011 graduates either: entered the Technical College System of GA/University System of GA without requiring remediation or learning support courses; or scored at least 22 out of 36 on the composite ACT; or scored at least 1550 out of 2400 on the combined SAT. Tattnall County has 214 migrant students (largest number in First District RESA), 26 homeless students, 14 immigrant students, 337 students receiving special education services, and 227 LEP students.

The Tattnall County School System has 264 teachers, 84 paraprofessionals, and ____ National Board Certified Teachers. Last year, new teachers accounted for 6.81% of the Tattnall County certified staff. The teacher attrition rate was 9.36%. 98.3% of Tattnall County teachers have a clear renewable teaching certificate. Of these, 29% held a four-year degree, 43% held a five-year degree, 23% held a six-year

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degree, and 5% held a doctorate degree. 100% of Tattnall County teachers and paraprofessionals are highly qualified. 5% of Tattnall County teachers have low experience, 65% have mid experience, and 30% have high experience.

Tattnall County believes in the value of our communities and having the smallest student-teacher ratio possible. Years ago, the voters of Tattnall County agreed upon the importance of having small schools based in the communities of Collins, Glennville, and Reidsville. Each of these three communities retained its elementary and middle school. A centralized Tattnall County High School was opened in 1993. While having smaller schools is a definite bonus for education, class size, and community involvement; the financial cost of maintaining seven schools is high. The system is operating under a \$31,542,038.00 budget with a \$3,111,145.90 fund balance. The current millage rate is 13.551, which is well below the state cap of 20. The per pupil expenditure is \$7,922.84 and is below the state per pupil expenditure of \$8,336.32.

Tattnall County High School has a Youth Apprenticeship Program incorporated into its Pathway course offerings. Students interested in a teaching career can participate in a teacher cadet class in where the students are paired with a certified teacher in grades Prek- twelfth grade. Students are able to observe and interact in an actual classroom environment and gain exposure to a career in education. This class helps the Tattnall County retention rate for certified teachers. We have many teachers who have found success in this program and returned home to teach.

In the last three years, Tattnall County has experienced many changes. A decrease in state and federal funding has cost the district both financially and in personnel. Cutbacks have been made where possible in all budgets and positions. The rising cost of employee benefits has also provided a financial challenge. The district has begun to consume financial reserves that had been built up in fund equity causing the county to abandon programs and reduce services. Tattnall County High School has had to discontinue its technology lab pathway and Drivers Education course. Staff development offerings have been reduced due to cuts in the Professional Learning Budget and the Title IIA Budget. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant has come to the end of its three year cycle. The mental health counselors that were employed by the grant are no longer available for services to students in all schools. We have extended our textbook adoption cycle so that textbooks would not have to be purchased as often as in the past. Field trips for students have all but been discontinued due to the rising cost of fuel and bus drivers. Although the furlough situation with Tattnall County employees continues, it has improved. Tattnall County staff was furloughed up to ten days in the past for paraprofessionals, twelve days for administrators, ten days for teachers, and student days were cut to 175. Due to sound financial management - all students now have 180 days of school and the staff is furloughed at a maximum of eight days for paraprofessionals and four days for administrators and teachers.

Tattnall County continues to have a large influx of migrant students due to our agricultural base. Our migrant students are beginning to live here year-round with their mother while their father moves with seasonal jobs. Tattnall County now has students who speak Vietnamese, Chinese, Gujarti, Spanish, and Hindi. Tattnall County struggles to fill positions that require bilingual abilities. While we are able to find some applicants who speak Spanish, we do not have anyone on staff who speaks Vietnamese, Chinese, Gujarti, and Hindi. We have used iPads and translation software to aid with instruction of these students.

Tattnall County also has a large population of residents who have stayed in our area for many generations. While this provides a definite investment in the community, it has also helped perpetuate the cycle of poverty in Tattnall County. Our students often drop out of school and remain unemployed in Tattnall County.

Tattnall County has only a few large companies that provide employment opportunities and a tax base for the public school system. While other systems enjoy the benefits of large corporations, the three high security prisons located in Tattnall County do help with employment, but they do not add to the tax base because the school system cannot collect property tax on the property on which these prisons are located. There are housing units for prison employees located on the GA State Prison property where many families live. These families pay no property tax; however, the children are transported by and educated in the Tattnall County School System.

Transportation continues to be a challenge for Tattnall County. Students who lack after school transportation are often not able to take advantage of after school tutoring or programs. Our school buses travel over 488 miles per day, often on dirt roads. The county is a large geographic area causing students to have extended bus rides each day. The rising cost of fuel and the availability of regular bus drivers and substitute bus drivers both add to the issue of transportation problems. The cost of transportation has gone up while the state budget for transportation is cut yearly.

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As the self-assessment process attests, the Tattnall County School system recognizes that there is room for improvement as it strives to achieve the vision of ensuring all students are successful today and prepared for tomorrow. System personnel recognize that there are challenges that must be overcome to realize the vision. The achievement data for the subgroups of students is a source of concern. Data is constantly analyzed, and interventions are sought to better serve these students; however, the lack of funding from state and federal sources has led to larger class sizes, fewer professional learning days, and less instructional materials with which to work. The school system has lost over \$16.9 million in austerity reductions in the last 11 years. The system is faced with implementing the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS), the new statewide accountability program - College and Career Readiness Indicator (CCRPI), TKES/LKES evaluation system for teachers and administrators, and continued changes to the high school math curriculum. The system personnel are confident that the strategic plan that has been put into place across the district will better expose the strengths and weaknesses, ensuring that the school system will continue to improve, meet the needs of the community, and become a place where all students will graduate and become productive citizens.

System's Purpose

Provide the school system's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school system embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

System's Purpose

Tattnall County School System

Motto: "Whatever It Takes"

Mission: The Tattnall County School District is committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure a quality education which affirms ALL students' value and worth and will lead to a 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.

Tattnall County School System Beliefs

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

The Tattnall County School System has committed its resources to doing "Whatever It Takes" to ensure student success. Our District has sought out innovative ways in which to reduce barriers to education for all of our students. We have been awarded the TeleHealth Grant which will allow all of our students to have access to state-of-the art healthcare at school each day. Students will no longer have a delay in accessing healthcare due to lack of transportation, parent apathy, or lack of available appointments. Students will be able to remain at school and receive instruction. Tattnall County has also received the CEO grant which allows all students to eat breakfast and lunch free each day. Tattnall County has provided school insurance free of cost for all students for the past ten years. The E2020 computer courses have been provided to students free of cost to catch up on course credits due to illness, attendance, and behavioral issues. Each of our schools have a clothes closet that provides clothes to needy students. Last year at TCHS, a local business donated 200 dresses to the school for use at prom. The school counselors were in charge of getting the dresses out to girls who were interested. It was quite a success. All of our schools

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also participate in the "Back Pack Buddy" program. This program is sponsored by local businesses and churches. It provides non-perishable foods that are taken home by students in a backpack on Friday. There is enough food in the backpack to ensure that our poverty stricken students have food over the weekend. In the past three years, special attention has been paid to our homeless students. Three years ago, we had no homeless students identified in our system. This year we have 24 identified. The counselors, registrars, and bus drivers have been vigilant in observing and reporting possible homeless students to the counselors at each school. These students are now accurately recorded in student record. We have been able to assist these students with the paperwork needed to enroll in college, food, school supplies, clothing, and sometimes shelter.

We have begun to use the motto "Whatever It Takes" when making routine decisions such as placement of students in the best educational setting, changing the sequence of high school courses based on the needs of our students, and in preparing our budget to provide services that will benefit all students. Kindergarten and first paraprofessionals are not required by law. In Tattnall County, however, we know that this additional support is needed to produce students who are proficient at reading and math.

Each school has taken the motto "Whatever It Takes" to its student body. The students came up with action statements that describe what they are willing to do to ensure their success. The students have really bought into this process. They have readily agreed to do their part and they have expressed appreciation for being included in the process. The parents at each school have also met and developed action statements on behalf of the parents. Student success is going to take effort on the part of school staff, parents, and students. In Tattnall County, all have agreed to do their part to contribute to our success.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school system's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school system is striving to achieve in the next three years.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

One of Tattall County's notable achievements is the number of programs and positions that we have been able to keep in place with the ongoing budget cuts from federal, state, and local funds. Tattall County High School employs two graduation coaches at local expense. Each elementary and middle school employs an academic coach with IA funds. Tattall County has a fulltime Parent Involvement Coordinator (50% local for use at our non-Title I school TCHS, 50% IA for use at the Title IA elementary and middle schools). We also employ a Special Education Parental Involvement Coordinator (Special Education funds) and a 50% locally paid interpreter. Tattall County goes above and beyond the staffing requirements required for our EL students. The additional EL endorsed teachers are paid with local funds. Tattall County also provides for a full-time counselor at every school (two at TCHS), a full-time media specialist at each school, a full-time Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) at each elementary and middle school. While these positions are partially funded with state funds, local funds are used to ensure that we have the necessary staff to meet our students' many needs.

Tattall County has implemented the Positive Behavior Intervention System for the past two years. Student behavior is tracked to eliminate the behavior problem once it is identified. Our use of this system has decreased the number of students suspended from school or placed in ISS. The early intervention of behavior problems has translated into students being present in class more often for direct instruction.

The leadership of Tattall County has been very proactive in preparing budgets reflecting anticipated budget cuts. The Superintendent, principals, and board office staff have prepared accurate budget information for the Board of Education's review and approval. Tattall County has not had to utilize a Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) since 2010.

Tattall County is very proud that we have pursued and received several grants that have impacted our students and schools. Tattall County High School has a Resource Officer that was originally funded 50% through a local Sheriff's Department Grant and 50% local funds. The resource officer is a liaison between the school and Sheriff's Department. The officer monitors the safe school environment, assists school administration, works to improve truancy and attendance problems, and patrols car and bus traffic on campus.

Tattall County has provided free breakfast for all students at local costs for the past ten years. Leadership has always believed in the importance of nutrition and its positive effects on education. The recently acquired Community Eligibility Option Grant, which provides free breakfast and lunch for every student in Tattall County, allows the system to continue to offer healthy, nutritious meals twice a day to all students.

In December 2012, the Tattall County Board of Education was awarded a School-Based Health Center capital equipment grant. The grant allows the system to enhance the quality of care and patient outcomes and improve access to care within the community by expanding and fully-equipping six school-based health centers at the schools in the system. The grant also allows the system to purchase telehealth equipment to provide regular primary and specialty medical care to our students.

The Tattall County School System is very fortunate to receive two grants that work hand-in-hand to increase the achievement rate and graduation rate for Hispanic students. The CAMINO grant funds the salary for staff who provide the after school program for Hispanic students at Tattall County High School. This program is aimed to provide knowledge and assistance needed to successfully participate in post-secondary school training. The REACHES grant provides the transportation costs for the after school program and the salary for an additional paraprofessional for the after school program. REACHES also provides transportation for college visitation for Hispanic students. For 2013, Tattall County's Title III program met the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) pertaining to the performance of Limited English Proficient students for AMAO I and II. AMAO III is lagging data and has not yet been received.

The Tattall County Special Education program receives recognition on state evaluations. Each year, the Georgia Department of Education

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reviews the data of each school system to evaluate the system's performance in meeting the requirements and purposes of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). For 10 years, the Tattnall County School System's Special Education program has earned the highest determination: Meets Requirements on all eight indicators and on Maintenance of Effort. The eight indicators include: rates of suspension and expulsion; disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services; disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories; initial evaluations completed within 60 days; early childhood transitions; measurable postsecondary goals for transition; timely correction of noncompliance; and timely and accurate data.

Our athletic programs in Tattnall County are a source of community pride. We have had success in softball, basketball, track, baseball, cheerleading, and football. Our middle schools and high school have strong athletic programs which encourage participation and skill acquisition. Our athletes have earned athletic and academic scholarships from the community college to D1 level. Tattnall County High School received a \$64,000 grant from Major League Baseball in 2011 to build a batting facility that is used by the softball and baseball team at TCHS. The facility contains batting cages, pitching mounds, and pitching machines. The coaches also allow the local recreation departments to use the batting facilities for practice.

Our local Television Station, WTOC, has a program called "WTOC Top Teacher". Each year, several members of the Tattnall County teaching staff are recognized and rewarded for their efforts. Teachers are nominated by their students and/or parents. Tattnall County High School has had the honor of producing the State Migrant Student of the Year for the past three years. This award is based on GPA, essay writing ability, and highest academic average.

Several individual schools have earned honors. Glennville Middle School has earned the 2014 Title I Highest Progress Reward School. Tattnall County High School (TCHS) was commended by State School Superintendent Barge for having the Highest Overall Score Increase on the SAT from FY11 to FY12. TCHS was also named a 2013-2014 National Beta Club School of Distinction.

As the school system has progressed through the strategic planning process, system personnel, parents, students, and community stakeholders have had the opportunity to examine all areas of the education process in Tattnall County. As indicated above, there are many accomplishments to celebrate; however, there were also areas of improvement on which to focus. The three strategic goal areas that were identified are: Improving Student Achievement, Building Positive Relationships, and Maintaining Organizational Effectiveness.

The main focus of the system strategic plan is on improving student achievement. We have identified curriculum, assessment, and standards-based instruction initiatives that will be implemented to increase student mastery of the curriculum. By implementing these initiatives, academic achievement will improve for all students, including our subgroups, which will improve our performance flags on the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). The performance flags will also improve as we increase the rigor of our courses and continue to offer higher level courses in which students can enroll. Our students will also be more prepared for college or careers, which will be evidenced by the post elementary, middle and high school readiness indicators on the CCRPI. Finally, our focus on improving student achievement should help our graduation rate continue to rise. In 2011, our graduation rate was 60.22%. It increased to 61.74% in 2012 and to 65.9% in 2013. We believe that the improvements we are making through the curriculum, assessment and standards-based instruction initiatives will improve student achievement and help our students become more successful whether they choose to obtain some type of post-secondary education or to enter the workforce.

Additional Information

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

Additional Information

Self Assessment Process:

Tattnall County Schools earned initial district accreditation in 2009. Recognizing that accreditation is an on-going school improvement process and that increasing student achievement involves more than improving instruction, the district works hard to continuously self assess how well all of the parts perform together - the district, school, and classroom - to meet the needs of the students. Once the district received the external review committee recommendations in 2009, the personnel began preparing for the 2014 review. The Quality Assurance Team recommended that the school system:

1. Develop a plan to monitor the implementation of all staff development activities and their impact on student achievement.
2. Provide additional curricular opportunities for students at all levels, but especially at the upper elementary, middle, and high school levels.
3. Examine other forms of data in addition to the results from state tests and standardized tests to determine school and district effectiveness.

The Tattnall County School System immediately put plans into place to address these recommendations and has continued to re-visit them as a part of the system improvement process.

The Tattnall County School System has also spent a great deal of time on the 2013 self assessment process. The process at the system level began with the establishment of five AdvancED committees and the identification of system leaders to serve as standard leaders. Each standard committee included a consistent representation of stakeholders that included system level leaders, school level leaders from each level, teachers from each level, parents from each level, and community/business members.

The system established a timeline and procedures for each committee to ensure a consistent self assessment process. Each of the schools replicated the system self assessment process. Additionally, the standard leaders met on an ongoing basis to provide updates and collaborate on the process. They also met with the school level standard leaders to provide support and consistency in the self assessment of each standard. The system collected the indicator ratings for all schools to compare with the system level ratings to determine if they were in alignment. The process for each standard committee included, but was not limited to, the following tasks:

1. Review Quality Assurance Team Report from 2009
2. Review Accreditation Progress Report from 2011
3. Revise SIP to reflect the outcomes of the self assessment
4. Review survey results
5. Review each indicator and brainstorm evidence and artifacts
6. Brainstorm and list accomplishments, strengths, challenges, and next steps for the standard
7. Use rubric to rate each indicator with the committee
8. Write narrative to support indicator ratings

The Tattnall County School System has conducted a comprehensive self assessment study and will benefit from the process and the feedback from the external review team.