

**STEWART COUNTY
MIDDLE SCHOOL
TITLE I SCHOOL WIDE PROGRAM**

FY: 2011-2012

Mr. Viola Fedd, Principal

Mr. Floyd Fort, Superintendent

Updated August 25, 2011

School Wide Program Checklist

School: Stewart County Middle School

FY: 2011-2012

Met	Not Met	
X		1. A comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school which addresses all academic areas and other factors that may affect achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a summary of the needs assessment
X		2. School wide reform strategies that are scientifically researched based and
X		a. Provide opportunities for all children in the school to meet or exceed Georgia's proficient and advanced levels of student performance
X		b. Are based upon effective means of raising student achievement
X		c. Use effective instructional methods that increase the quality and amount of learning time.
X		d. Address the needs of all children, particularly targeted populations, and address how the school will determine if such needs have been met and are consistent with improvement plans approved under Educate America Act.
X		3. Instruction by highly qualified professional staff
X		a. Strategies to attract highly qualified teachers to high-needs schools
X		4. Professional development for staff to enable all children in the school to meet performance standards.
X		5. Strategies to increase parental involvement
X		6. Plans for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood programs to local elementary school programs.
X		7. Measures to include teachers in the decisions regarding the use of assessment to provide information on, and to improve the performance of individual students and the overall instructional program.
X		8. Coordination and integration of Federal, State, and local services and programs.
X		a. List of State and local educational agency programs and other federal programs that will be included.
X		b. Description of how resources from Title I and other sources will be used.
X		c. Plan developed in coordination with other programs, including those under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act, and National and Community Service Act of 1990.

X		9. Activities to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering standards shall be provided with effective, timely assistance, which shall include:
X		a. Measures to ensure that students' difficulties are identified on a timely basis.
X		b. Periodic training for teachers in the identification of difficulties and appropriate assistance for identified difficulties.
X		c. Teacher-parent conferences that detail
X		• What the school will do to help the student
X		• What the parents can do to help the student
X		• What additional assistance is available to the student/family at the school or in the community
X		10. Description of how individual student assessment results and interpretation will be provided to the parents.
X		11. Provisions for the collection and disaggregation of data on the achievement and assessment results of students.
X		12. Provisions to ensure that disaggregated assessment results for each category is valid and reliable.
X		13. Provisions for public reporting of disaggregated data.
X		14. Plan developed during a one year period, unless LEA, after considering the recommendations of its technical assistance providers, determines that less time is needed to develop and implement the school wide program.
X		15. Plan developed with the involvement of the community to be served and individuals who will carry out the plan including teachers, principals, other school staff, and pupil service personnel, parents and students.
X		16. Plan available to the LEA, parents and the public
X		17. Plan translated to the extent feasible, into any language that a significant percentage of the parents of participating students in the school speak as their primary language.
X		18. Plan is subject to the school improvement provisions of Section 1116.

Title I Director's Signature

Date

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OVERVIEWS

Stewart County is a sparsely populated, rural county in southwest Georgia. According to the 2010 US Census, the population was 6,058, an increase from the 2000 population of 5,252. However, by 2015 the Census Bureau projects a population of 4,583 which reflects a -24.3% decrease in population.

Currently the top five employers in Stewart County are Four County Health Care LLC, Stewart - Webster Hospital, Stewart -Webster Rural Health Board Inc., Stewart Correctional Facility, and Farmers State Bank. Agricultural farming includes forestry, poultry/egg, livestock, ornamental horticulture, fruits and nuts, and row/forage crops. Approximately 60% of Stewart County residents work outside the county and engage in a thirty minute or longer commute to work. The 2010 average unemployment rate in Stewart County was 12.2% which was above the state average of 10.6%. The 2010 Census identified 47% of the population as African-American, 28% Caucasian, 24% Hispanic, and 1% other ethnic groups. In 2010 dollars, the per capita income was \$1,301 monthly which was below the state average of \$2,094.

Many adults have inadequate education and limited job opportunities resulting in a high number of families living in poverty. Twenty-four percent (24%) of persons live below the poverty level. However, 41% of Stewart County’s children, aged birth to 17, are currently living below the poverty level. Thirty percent of persons age 25+ did not graduate from high school. Persons age 25+ holding a Bachelor’s degree or higher is 11%. The 2010 Census reports median household income was \$30,954, which is more than \$18,000 below the state average of \$49,347. Lack of community industrial growth, little or no recreational facilities, licensed daycare centers,

or programs for school age children outside school and home further contribute to the low socio-economic status of families.¹

Stewart County Middle School (6th through 8th grade) is home to approximately 135 students with an ethnicity as follows: 3% White, 96% Black, and 1% other ethnic groups. Approximately 11% of the student body is enrolled in Special Education. School personnel consist of 7 certified teachers and support personnel. The average pupil/teacher ratio at the school is 16:1. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the student body qualifies for free or reduced price meals

Stewart County Middle School, a Title I School of Distinction, has made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as specified in the No Child Left Behind federal statute for four consecutive years. The school's motto is "Embracing the Community". The district and the school have received accreditation from SACS (Southern Association of Schools and Colleges).

According to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, Stewart County Middle School's percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards in 2010-2011 was **70.34%**. This percentage reflects a **GAIN** over the previous year of 7.34%. This change was **ABOVE** 93.44% of the middle schools in Georgia.

Listed below are performance highlights of the academic measures of the school that met or exceeded 80%:

Grade	Content Area	% Meeting and Exceeding Standard
7	CRCT Math	94.74
7	CRT English Language Arts	92.11
7	CRCT Reading	89.47
8	CRCT Reading	88.0
6	CRCT English Language Arts	84.21
8	CRCT English Language Arts	82.00
6	CRCT Reading	81.58

¹ All data supplied by US Census Bureau, Georgia Department of Labor, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, and www.quickfacts.census.gov

I. COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Stewart County Middle School has conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school which addresses all academic areas and other factors that may affect achievement. The Title I School Wide Plan has been developed with the participation of individuals who will carry out the comprehensive school wide school improvement plan. Those persons involved were:

NAME	POSITION/ROLE
Vi Fedd	Middle School Principal/Curriculum Director
Floyd Fort	Superintendent/Title I Director
John Hamilton	Principal High School
Jeanette Lougee	System Math Coach
Melinda Phillips	Graduation Coach 6 th through 12 th
Joann Gamble	Counselor 6 th through 12 th
Steve Olive	State Director
Cherrika Ashford	Title I Parent Involvement Coordinator
Terri Ansley	6 th Math Teacher
Arlyce Armour	6 th and 8 th ELA Teacher
Gary Chesnut	Vocational Teacher
Dr. Vijay Gangadharan	9 th through 12 th Math Teacher
Annette Johnston	9 th and 10 th ELA Teacher
Joan Jones	11 th and 12 th ELA Teacher
Rhonda Jones	6 th and 7 th ELA Teacher
Luanne Long	Media Specialist 6 th through 12 th
Sudish Nair	High School Physical Science/Biology Teacher

Dr. Joseph Gardner	Special Education Director
Paulette White	8 th Math Teacher
Marilyn Johnston	Parent
Billie Mallory	Family and Community Specialist
Mark Taylor	6 th through 8 th Science Teacher
Celeste Frey	6 th through 8 th Social Studies Teacher
Linda Page-Williams	Educational Management Solutions Consultant

Stewart County Middle School used the following instruments, procedures, and processes to obtain needs assessment data and information:

Even though Stewart County Middle School was making Adequate Yearly Progress and was recognized as a Title I School of Distinction, the administration and staff realized that greater student achievement was possible. They wanted an in depth review of their professional practices and factors that might be barriers to student learning. Therefore, in February 2010, the Georgia Department of Education conducted a GAPSS (Georgia Performance Standards for Schools) analysis that is correlated to *Georgia School Keys and Implementation Resource Guide*. The following were among the target areas for improvement:

In ***Curriculum***, the recommendations were:

1. To further expand teachers' collaborative work to design consistent and authentic common assessments in all content areas;
2. To increased the use of diagnostic assessment to determine background knowledge and skills;
3. To revise instruction and to identify related instructional interventions;
4. To integrate instructional strategies into the classroom to encourage students to use higher order thinking skills, problem-solving and decision-making processes and mental habits of the mind;
5. To increase the use of differentiated instruction;
6. To increase student use of modern technology as an effective instructional tool.

In ***Professional Learning*** the recommendations were:

1. To provide more opportunities for teachers to participate in instructional leadership roles;

2. To ensure that all professional learning activities promote teachers' understanding of research-based instructional and assessment strategies;
3. To implement professional learning activities that provided staff with skills to involve families and other stakeholders.

In ***Student Family and Community Support***, the recommendations included:

1. To determine parenting skills program needs through the use of data and then use that data to implement parenting skills training that would encourage parents to assume a more direct role in their student's achievement;
2. To expand the opportunities for families and community members to play a more active role in the school.

Moreover, the report encouraged the ***Leadership Team***:

1. To be more actively engaged in disaggregating and using a variety of assessment data to monitor the progress of the School Improvement Plan.

The Stewart County Middle School shares a common campus with Stewart County High School. The high school had been in Needs Improvement for nine years and had decided to select an aggressive restructuring process which was embodied in the scientifically researched-based Transformation Reform Model. Because the middle school is a feeder school for the high school, the middle school administration and staff realized the critical importance of vertical alignment with the high school's reform model. The middle school was faced with the responsibility of sending rising freshmen to high school reading, writing, and mathematically functioning on or above grade level. The school had a vested interest in preparing students to meet the academic challenges of high school in order for students to graduate on time and be acclimatized to the idea of post secondary schooling. Therefore, Stewart County Middle School, after in-depth conversations with the Superintendent, Board Members, high school administrators and staff, decided to adopt the Transformation Reform Model as their own school improvement and Title I plan for a minimum of three years.

The Needs Assessment committee of Stewart County Middle School analyzed a variety of school data including Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), the CRCT (Criterion Referenced Test), Eighth Grade Writing Test, and attendance rates. The results from the county-wide Special Education monitoring from the State, in-house focus walks, and stakeholder surveys were also carefully studied. As part of the evaluative process demographic data, anecdotal data, as well as brainstorming ideas were considered, especially in terms of increasing parental and community support for the school.

Data indicated that **CRCT** scores from 2007 to 2011 have risen in every core subject area, especially in math. However, the increased scores do not reflect adequate achievement for all students at Stewart County Middle School. The scores are significantly below the state average, especially in science and social studies, and remain a concern.

The **Eighth Grade Writing Test** has shown sustained improvement for the last five years, from 63% to 77%, excluding 2008 when scores dipped to 62%.²

Demographic data, explained in the Overview section, along with fiscal challenges stemming from an economic downturn (e.g., In the last 40 years the population of Stewart County has decreased by 2,000. Stewart County schools have lost 361FTEs over the past eight years; yet our graduation rate has steadily increased from 43% in 2007 to 71% in 2010.)³, cannot hamper the implementation of best practices in education and impede the progress of students toward reaching their goals and dreams. Transforming education in Stewart County schools is the hope of future generations in a declining and impoverished area. While circumstances are challenging, the school cannot afford to let students, and ultimately the larger community, suffer. These barriers must be overcome to ensure that all students graduate.

In February 2010, the Georgia Department of Education monitored Stewart County **Special Education Department** and recommended the following instructional actions be taken to effect continuous improvement: 1) classroom observations to include co-teaching; 2) differentiation and assistive technology; 3) delivery of standards-based instruction in inclusion classes; 4) offering extended school year opportunities for special education students; and 5) offering supplementary services in reading and math to be reflected in the Individual Education Plan.

One of the goals of the School Improvement Plan has been to implement standards-based classrooms throughout the curriculum. Each year **focus walks** have been done by an administrative group to assess the school's progress. Although standards are posted and the GPS curriculum is taught, standards are not being referenced consistently enough, and instructional frameworks are not clearly defined in many classrooms. Very little differentiation has been observed.

Various **survey data** clearly indicate a need for the best possible instructional strategies to improve student achievement, the need for support from parents and the community and the professional growth of teachers and leadership to meet the many challenges that face Stewart County Middle School.

² *Ibid.*

³ Stewart County School System, 2011.

Stewart County Middle School analyzed current achievement data and other school data that will help the school understand the subjects and skills in which teaching and learning needs to be improved.

Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)⁴					
	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
AYP Status	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
AYP Targets Met	ELA, Math,	ELA, Math,	ELA, Math	ELA, Math	ELA
AYP Targets Missed					Math
School Improvement Status	Distinguished	Distinguished	Distinguished	Distinguished	Did Not Meet

6th Grade CRCT in Percentages⁵					
Subgroup:	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
All	Meets/Exceeds	Meets/Exceeds	Meets/Exceeds	Meets/Exceeds	Meets/Exceeds

⁴ Georgia Department of Education: School Reports; www.doe.k12.ga.us, op.cit.

⁵ Ibid.

Students					
Reading	82	85	80	77	77
ELA	84	95	82	66	74
Math	58	67	61	44	35
Science	50	45	24	28	9
Social Studies	66	28	Data Not Available	Data Not Available	51

7th Grade CRCT in Percentages⁶					
Subgroup:	2010-2011 Meets/Exceeds	2009-2010 Meets/Exceeds	2008-2009 Meets/Exceeds	2007-2008 Meets/Exceeds	2006-2007 Meets/Exceeds
All Students					
Reading	91	83	26	87	80
ELA	92	91	59	79	82
Math	95	83	65	64	50
Science	66	50	30	26	24
Social Studies	61	24	Data Not Available	Data Not Available	64

8th Grade CRCT in Percentages⁷					
Subgroup:	2010-2011 Meets/Exceeds	2009-2010 Meets/Exceeds	2008-2009 Meets/Exceeds	2007-2008 Meets/Exceeds	2006-2007 Meets/Exceeds
All Students					
Reading	88	91	84	77	77
ELA	82	78	91	68	74
Math	72	67	67	49	35
Science	20	32	19	28	9
Social	32	27	25	Data Not	51

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Studies				Available	
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8th Grade Writing Test in Percentages⁸					
Subgroup	2010-2011 Pass	2009-2010 Pass	2008-2009 Pass	2007-2008 Pass	2006-2007 Pass
All Students	77	71	75	62	63

Stewart County Middle School has taken into account the needs of migrant children.

Currently the school does not have any migrant students. Should these students enroll in the school, the following steps would be taken to provide for their needs:

- Contact the Southern Pine Migrant Education Agency that serves school districts in Region 2 and is responsible for providing support and technical assistance to schools.
- The Southern Pine MEA provides assistance with program planning and implementation, program evaluation, social services information, identification and recruitment of migrant children, and professional development.
- The Southern Pines MEA, upon request, provides Spanish speaking interpreters for migrant families.

Stewart County Middle School has based the school wide plan on information about all students in the school and identified students and subgroups of students who are not yet achieving to the State academic content standards and the State student academic achievement standards:

- There are two major subgroups at the school: Black students and Economically Disadvantaged students. Other ethnic groups (e.g., White and Students with Disabilities) lack sufficient population to constitute a subgroup).

⁸ Ibid.

- Economically Disadvantaged students in AYP grades made 0.7% less in the Meets/Exceeds category on the 2010-2011 Math CRCT than students in the Black subgroup.
- Black subgroup students in AYP grades made 5.6% less in the Meets/Exceeds category on the 2010-11 Reading/English Language Arts CRCT than students in the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup.
- Although Students with Disabilities did not constitute a subgroup (i.e., <40 students), data indicates these students perform significantly lower than their peers in the Black and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups.
 - Students with Disabilities in AYP grades made 14.3% less than the Black subgroup and 13.5% less than the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup in the meets standard category on the 2010-11 Math CRCT.
 - Students with Disabilities in AYP grades made 28.1% less than the Black subgroup and 27.6% less than the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup in the meets standard category on the 2010-11 Reading/English Language Arts CRCT.
- Stewart County Middle School does not have Hispanic students, migrant students, or English Language Learners enrolled at this time.

The data has helped Stewart County Middle School reach conclusions regarding achievement or other related data:

Major strengths determined were:

- Curriculum and Instruction
 - The school has implemented and monitors a school-wide plan for vertical alignment of the curriculum among all high school core content teachers with special emphasis on mathematics.
 - Administrators, instructional coaches, and teacher leaders are used to monitor curriculum implementation through targeted awareness walks with Georgia Performance Standards and the Georgia Frameworks in hand and analysis of student work to provide meaningful and timely feedback to teachers.

- Teachers are attempting to integrate a variety of flexible grouping strategies in order to move away from teacher-centered, whole-class instruction to student-centered instruction, using research-based strategies.
- All students (regular education and special education) are provided standards-based, grade-level instruction.
- A Pyramid of Interventions for instruction that provides structures, safety nets, and strategies for students who are not mastering the standards has been implemented and is monitored.
- Structures are in place for collaborative instructional planning
- Professional Learning
 - Professional learning activities are focused and based on data-driven needs.
 - All professional learning is monitored for impact on student achievement and teachers are provided timely and specific feedback.
- Leadership
 - School administrators and instructional coaches actively monitor curriculum, assessment, and instruction and provide specific feedback and coaching to teachers.
 - The Leadership Team has been expanded to include special education and support area teachers.
 - A data room has been established and maintained to support the monitoring of student learning (including formative, benchmark, attendance, discipline referrals, perception data, and barriers to student learning) which enables staff to analyze, revise, and monitor continuous improvement action steps.

The major needs discovered were:

- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
 - Learning time must be increased to improve achievement.

- A thorough integration of instructional technology is needed to support teaching and learning.
 - Literacy for all students can be improved with the implementation of a reading program.
 - A school-wide focus on formative assessment and differentiated learning must be initiated.
 - More effectively use existing structures for collaborative instructional planning.
 - More effectively use GPS notebooks and Data notebooks to document teaching and learning.
 - Develop a plan to retain effective teachers and remove ineffective teachers through the use of incentives, rewards, and implementation of Class Keys teacher evaluation system.
- Professional Learning
 - All professional learning needs to be job-embedded, supported with consultation and coaching, and based on identified needs.
 - Leadership
 - Leadership needs to focus on achieving learning goals.
 - School Culture
 - Focus needs to be on behavioral change rather than regulation of change to ensure sustainability.
 - Student, Family, and Community Support
 - Increase stakeholder engagement with a focus on educating parents to support their children under the direction of a parent community coordinator.

The needs to be addressed are:

- All of the aforementioned items are to be addressed over a three-year period

The specific academic needs of those students that are to be address in the school wide program will be:

- English Language Arts with emphasis on the domains of comprehension and vocabulary.
- Mathematics with emphasis on the domains of Algebra, Measurement, and Geometry.

Root cause(s) discovered for each of the needs were:

- **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**
 - (Increase learning time)--Previously the middle school operated on block scheduling; however, in the spring of 2010 a collaborative decision was made to move from block scheduling to a seven-period day. Block scheduling did not allow for flexibility in the master schedule. Once the seven-period day schedule was implemented, a 35 minute per day study skills course, Knights' Time, could be added. Another barrier to increased learning time was the lack of a week of mandatory intercession following spring break for teachers and students.
 - (Integration of instructional technology)--The school had purchased many technology programs and equipment for teachers to use in preparing and implementing instruction. However, the school did not have a Technology Specialist to provide on-going professional learning and monitoring of technological implementation. Teachers were left to their own discretion as to how to integrate technology into teaching and learning. Furthermore, the school did not have an active technology committee responsible for making recommendations for equipment and professional learning based on need.
 - (Literacy for all learners)--The major emphasis in English Language Arts classes was literature and composition. While students made academic progress in these areas, students lacked sufficient comprehension strategies and vocabulary knowledge to be successful in other content courses (e.g., Science, Social Studies, and Math) as well as vocationally oriented classes. There was insufficient emphasis on *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Readers* and these skills were not embedded in ELA Classes consistently. Furthermore, there was little to no emphasis on teaching content and vocational classes how to utilize reading comprehension strategies.
 - (Formative assessments)--Teachers had received professional learning on assessments (e.g., formative VS summative) during the implementation of Georgia Performance Standards. While teachers had basic knowledge of formative assessments, not all were participating in the collaborative development of benchmark assessments (post tests) and pretests for instructional units. There

was a common lack of understanding in reference to how to use formative assessments in that it was not used to guide and inform instruction. Therefore, all teachers were unable to gauge students' understanding of major content/concepts prior to unit instruction to address whole class and individual issues. Likewise, there had not been sufficient professional learning on how to design and implement differentiated instruction. Special education and co-teachers did not work effectively in instructional planning. Teachers in regular education classes lacked adequate knowledge to use data to inform differentiated instruction.

- (Existing structures for collaborative planning)--Structures for collaborative instructional planning existed at the school. Block scheduling made horizontal and vertical collaborative planning difficult during the day. The majority of planning had to occur after school. While teachers participated in Study Groups and whole faculty groups on Tuesdays, there was insufficient time for in-depth planning.
- (GPS and data notebooks)--Teachers had been required to maintain a GPS and a Data Notebook to document teaching and learning. However, adjustments or changed teacher behavior was not consistently observed.
- (Retain and remove teachers)--Stewart County School System did not have a systematic way to retain effective teachers due to a lack of incentives and rewards. The method for removing ineffective teachers was based on three twenty- minute observations during the year in which teachers could score Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory on the Georgia Teacher Observation Instrument (GTOI). Additional documentation of satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance was based on the Georgia Teacher Duties and Responsibilities Instrument (GTDRI). While teachers complied with collecting evidence and artifacts of professional practices, strong accountability was not in place for removal of unsatisfactory teachers.

- **Professional Learning**

- There was not always a direct correlation between professional learning and identified needs. While teachers attended professional learning, the school was unable to provide adequate consultation and coaching due to insufficient support staff (e.g., Technology and Math Specialists).

- **Leadership**

- The principal of Stewart County Middle School has been an instructional leader who engaged the staff in standards-based teaching and learning. However, when the high school principal was replaced in 2010, the middle school principal was able to more effectively implement the process of using data to make informed instructional decisions and engage the faculty in more focused collaborative planning since these procedures became the norm for the two schools. Because the middle school staff had some experiences in these areas, the staff was able to comply with and understand the implementation emphasis. Therefore, the principal and Leadership Team now will be able to focus more effectively and in depth on achieving learning goals.
- **School Culture**
 - For many years the professional culture at Stewart County Middle and High School was based on regulation of change to ensure sustainability rather than on behavioral change. The culture is slowly changing as the principals of both schools engage in shared leadership with the faculty regarding instructional decisions, governance issues, and development of teacher leaders.
- **Student, Family, and Community Support**
 - Stewart County Middle School has been unsuccessful in garnering active family and community support through the years. Until recently the system did not have a staff person solely responsible for ensuring an effective partnership between the school and the parents and between the school and the community. A Family Community Specialist has been hired to reach out, communicate, and work with parents, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties with the greater community.

Measurable goals have been established to address identified needs:

- **Reading/English Language Arts**
 - SY 2011-2012: Number of students exceeding the ELA portion of the CRCT will increase from 87% to 90%.
 - SY 2012-2013: Number of students exceeding the ELA portion of the CRCT will increase from 90% to 95%
 - SY 2013 to 2014: Number of students exceeding the ELA portion of the CRCT will increase from 95% to 96%.
- **Mathematics**

- SY 2011-2012: Number of students exceeding the Math portion of the CRCT will increase from 76% to 81%.
- SY 2012-2013: Number of students exceeding the Math portion of the CRCT will increase 81% to 85%.
- SY 2013-2014: Number of students exceeding the Math portion of the CRCT will increase from 85% to 88%.

2. SCHOOLWIDE REFORM STRATEGIES THAT ARE SCIENTIFICALLY RESEARCHED BASED

In order to accomplish goals established after analyzing needs assessment data, Stewart County Middle School adopted scientifically research-based reform strategies that meet the following Title I criteria:

1. Provide opportunities for all children in the school to meet or exceed Georgia's proficient and advanced levels of student performance on the State's academic content (Georgia Performance Standards) and student academic achievement standards which are assessed on the Georgia High School Graduation Test
2. Are based upon effective means of raising student achievement
3. Use effective instructional methods that increase the quality and amount of learning time
4. Address the needs of all children, particularly target populations

5. Address how the school will determine if such needs have been met and are consistent with the improvement plans approved under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

Reform Strategy 1: Transformational Reform Model

Goal: Successfully implement the Transformational Reform Model^{9,10}

There is a growing body of research that indicates that school districts must play a central role in coordinating and supporting change. Individual schools are responsible for implementing the change initiative, but the district sets the stage for meaningful and sustainable change.¹¹ Specifically, LEAs can support school improvement efforts by:

- Committing to success in spite of challenges,
- Identifying schools for targeted intervention,
- Assessing capacity in order to determine “best” intervention strategy,
- Cultivating a pipeline of highly capable turnaround/transformation/restart school leaders, and
- Create conditions for success (i.e., grant school leaders the autonomy and flexibility to make the necessary big changes).¹²

The theory of action underlying the turnaround model is that the existing configuration of leadership and instructional personnel has not created a learning environment in which students are succeeding. Therefore, in order to dramatically change the environment for the benefit of the children currently enrolled in the school, the adults must change.¹³ Under the turnaround model, change entails literal change of personnel as well as behavioral change by the high-capacity personnel that remain.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, www.nwrcc.educationnorthwest.org/intervention-model/transformation

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, U.S. Department of Education (2010). *Guidance on School Improvement Grants Under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*. Washington, DC. Author.

¹¹ Kowal, J., Hassel, E. A., & Hassel, B. C. (2009). *Successful school turnarounds: Seven steps for district leaders*. Washington, DC: The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement.

¹² Brinson, D. and Rhim, L. (2009). *Breaking the habit of low performance*. Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation & Improvement. Retrieved from www.centerii.org/survey The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement. (2009). *School restructuring, What works when? A guide for education leaders*. Washington, DC: Learning Points Associates.

¹³ Perlman, C. L., & Redding, S. (Eds.) (2009). *Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants*. Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation & Improvement. Retrieved from: <http://www.centerii.org/handbook/>

Changes required to occur under the transformation model, as outlined by the U.S. Department of Education, are:¹⁴

- Replace principal
- Implement new evaluation system developed with staff
- Use student growth as a significant factor
- Identify and reward staff who are increasing student outcomes; support and then remove those who are not
- Implement strategies to recruit, place, and retain staff
- Select and implement an instructional model based on student needs
- Provide job-embedded professional development designed to build capacity and support staff
- Ensure continuous use of data to inform and differentiate instruction
- Provide increased learning time
- Provide an ongoing mechanism for community and family engagement
- Partner to provide social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports
- Provide sufficient operating flexibility to implement reform
- Ensure ongoing technical assistance

Reform Strategy 2: Professional Evaluations

Goal: Implement a new evaluation system developed with staff that is rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that take into account data on student growth, multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduation rates.¹⁵

Stewart County Middle School is presently part of Cohort III for the Class Keys evaluation instrument (Classroom Analysis of School Standards). Class Keys,¹⁶ as the evaluation tool for teachers will take effect during 2011-2012, as will Leader Keys,¹⁷ instead of local evaluation instruments.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, U.S. Department of Education (2010). Guidance on School Improvement Grants Under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ www.doe.k12.ga.us

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Chattahoochee-Flint RESA School Improvement Specialists have trained leadership personnel on using Class Keys to evaluate teachers. Based on the GAPPS Analysis that teachers should have more opportunities to develop their leadership potential, a team of teachers and leaders will be selected to attend the Stewart County Teacher Institute to participate in job embedded professional learning activities designed to develop leadership potential and enhance student achievement, thereby improving the graduation rate.

Teaching staff has been received professional learning on how the Class Keys will be used to specifically improve implementation of best practices and to evaluate teachers. The faculty chose three standards and corresponding elements for their initial study based on the results of the Class Keys Assessment. Upon reaching consensus, they agreed to focus on organizing the framework for planning instruction, clearly communicating learning expectations, and demonstrating the use of research-based practices with emphasis on thinking maps. The study of these three standards was aligned to the GAPSS Review.

For almost ten years the Georgia Department of Education has been training schools to implement standards-based teaching and learning. Therefore, the development of the Class Keys focuses on assessment practices in classrooms. Teachers have received feedback on formative assessments used to measure student learning, as well as, on the alignment of curriculum standards with instructional practices and collaborative professional learning.

Performance coaching provided by Class Keys will ensure teacher growth and development and accountability for student achievement. No longer will a yearly evaluation consist of a twenty minute observation, but instead on multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement. Individual teacher needs will be addressed through the use of Teacher Key modules in professional learning.

During the current school year teachers will be held accountable for student achievement based on multiple criteria previously decided by a collaborative group of teachers and leaders. The expectation is to retain current evidence and artifact requirements for teacher accountability: 1) maintenance of a GPS notebook for standards-based instructional units and planning; 2.) a data notebook to track student progress throughout the year; and 4) student portfolios showing evidence of progressive work. Longitudinal, three-year summative state test scores and students' benchmark test results will become the basis for the school's evaluation system.

Professional growth plans will include teacher goal setting for their students and action plans to achieve the goals. This part of the professional growth plan will be directly tied to the school's continuous improvement plan.

Consultants who will be working with Stewart County Middle School will support teachers in the analysis of data, writing learning goals for individual students, progress monitoring student achievement, and responding to students' needs through differentiated instruction.

Reform Strategy 3: Staff Rewards¹⁸

Goal: Identify and reward school leaders, teacher, and other staff who have increased student achievement and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so.¹⁹

Over a three year period, school leaders, teachers, and other staff members who effectively implement the Transformational Reform Model by showing an increase in students' achievement will be awarded a reward incrementally in accordance with their discipline (English Language Arts, Math, Science, or Social Studies) or as a whole group (all teachers.)

¹⁸ Glewwe, P. et.al. (2003) Teacher incentives. Cambridge, MA: The National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w9671>.

¹⁹*Op.cit.*, U.S. Department of Education (2010). Guidance on School Improvement Grants Under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

- If the school makes a 5% increase for the CRCT in a core discipline, teachers in the current discipline that makes this gain will be awarded \$100 at the end of the first year, \$200 at the end of the second year, and \$250 at the end of the 3rd year.
- If the school makes a 5% gain in reading, language arts, and math all certified staff will be awarded \$250 at the end of the first year, \$450 at the end of the second year, and \$1500 at the end of year three.
- Cadres of grade-level teachers will be paid an award of \$100 each if students in their grade level (6th, 7th, 8th) homeroom meet the yearly school wide attendance goal. The leadership team will set the goal each year according to previous data.

Reform Strategy 4: Professional Development

Goal: Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development regarding subject-specific pedagogy and differentiated instruction and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies.²⁰

Based on the GAPSS Analysis, target areas for improvement in instruction included increasing the use of differentiated instruction in the classroom. Consideration for differentiated instruction incorporating flexible group strategies was suggested as well. Another recommendation expressed the idea that professional learning activities should promote the sustained development of teachers' deep understanding of research-based instructional and assessment strategies.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Study Groups meet on Tuesday twice a month during planning periods and whole group meets after school on alternate Tuesdays.²¹ The Leadership Team meets weekly after school on Mondays. Teachers engage in data analysis during these meetings to examine end-of-the-year state test data and semester benchmark scores. As noted in the GAPSS, diagnostic assessment at the unit level should be used as a systematic way to determine background knowledge and skills, including adjustment of content, process, product, and learning environment based on individual students' needs. Furthermore, after diagnostic testing, formative assessment needs to be implemented to revise instruction for all learners and to identify related instructional interventions. More collaboration of formative data during study groups and Leadership Team meetings will improve both student achievement and the graduation rate in the long run.

The GAPSS Analysis noted that instructional strategies should be integrated into the classroom so as to encourage all learners to use higher order thinking skills and to use mental habits of the mind. All teachers have been trained to use Thinking Maps²². However, a focus walk through all classrooms to assess the implementation on the use of Thinking Maps revealed that although teachers were using a variety of Thinking Maps, frequently the thinking was involved in construction the thinking map and was not utilized when students had to integrate or synthesize their thinking in new situations. Hence, teachers will receive additional professional development on Thinking Maps to deepen the understanding of how to get the maximum cognitive leverage from the Thinking Maps.

Teachers will attend a five day Teacher Institute in which professional learning will be focused on formative assessment practices such as flexible grouping to increase the achievement of low-performing students. The use of information gathered from the formative assessments will be used to adjust teaching and learning daily. A consultant will deliver the professional learning on formative assessments early in the year and return throughout the year to provide instruction on developing common assessments and conducting item analysis. The math specialist, graduation coach, technology specialist, and RESA consultants will provide instructional coaching to assist teachers in implementing clear targets for learning, provide specific feedback on instructional practice, and guide the development of student-self assessment. Any teachers new to the school will be trained by the same consultant, so that the entire staff will have the identical knowledge base concerning formative assessments. In addition, this consultant will make several visits during the ensuing two years to monitor how assessments are being used to guide instruction.

²¹ Murphy, C. U. and Lick, D. W. (1998, First Edition). Whole-faculty study groups: A powerful way to change schools and enhance learning. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

²² Smith, N. (2003). Thinking Maps® and write from the beginning theory and empirical evidence. Manchester: NH: TRIERE Research.

Classroom Performance Systems (clickers) have been purchased to assist teacher with formative assessment. This equipment will provide immediate response from the students, thus allowing the teacher to provide timely feedback to students and to make adjustments to instruction.

As formative assessment becomes embedded into teachers' classroom practices, professional learning will begin to address not only the quantity of feedback, but also the quality of feedback. The practice of looking at student work collaboratively during weekly study group meetings will lead to more thoughtful assignments and improved feedback to students. Commentary will include a description of current progress, and detailed information on how to proceed to the next level of performance.

Reform Strategy 5: Career Growth

Goal: Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students.²³

School and district administrators regularly collaborate with all staff members to elicit input and provide opportunities for shared decision-making and problem solving to ensure accountability. This process and structure is in place through the Leadership Team which is voluntary and meets weekly and through whole group faculty meetings after school. In order to provide more opportunities to reinforce the development and use of staff members' leadership skills, an organizational structure will be implemented to include an Instructional Leadership Academy,

²³ *Op. cit.*, U.S. Department of Education (2010). Guidance on School Improvement Grants Under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

which provides experiences for teachers to serve as instructional leaders, and a mentoring program.

- The Leadership team will participate in a four-day leadership retreat (off site) in the summer at Lake Blackshear for continuous school improvement planning which will have direct impact on student achievement
- A three-day Leadership Academy for aspiring leaders through GLISI Base Camp will be established. Interested participants will have to apply for acceptance into the academy and if selected will earn a stipend of \$500 and receive PLU credits. A team of ten teachers will be selected annually to participate in the initiative.
- Selected staff will plan, organize, and lead specific professional learning, study groups, and whole group meetings when appropriate with support of RESA, ETTC, GLRS, and in-house support staff.

In order to recruit, place, and retain staff the following strategies will be implemented:

- A recruiting signing bonus of \$3000 will be given to teachers in critical areas of need.
- Teachers who meet and/or exceed system expectations for student achievement and graduation will be given incentive bonuses.
- Individual and group rewards determined by the Leadership Team will be given to teachers who effectively implement learned strategies after training, modeling, and coaching. The evidence for effective implementation will be documented in the teachers' GPS and Data Notebooks in accordance with the School Keys High Impact rubrics, Class Keys, and local observation tools (e.g., walk-throughs, focus walks, and multiple evaluations). Teachers will be trained by the technology specialist on the use of instructional technology equipment (e.g., I-Pads, digital cameras, video cameras, webinars, and instructional videos). Teachers who are struggling with the implementation of professional learning will be identified and given appropriate support from leadership and instructional coaches.
- Teachers will be paid a stipend for participating in the mandatory professional training (off contract) as indicated in the targeted areas of the GAPSS, the School Improvement Plan, and the Georgia Department of Education's Short Term Action Plans.

- A Beginning Teacher Institute will include three days of training to be followed by three days of additional mentoring/training. Participants will receive:
 - School data to include achievement data and graduation rate, as well as a root cause analysis of the data
 - High –quality training that focuses on classroom management, curriculum/lesson development, instructional strategies and assessments with the intent of helping students graduate on time
 - Registration to the teacher’s content area organization conference
 - Opportunities to network and make new contacts with colleagues
 - All teachers with less than three years of experience will be assigned a mentor.
 - Mentors, trained by RESA, will be paid a stipend of \$500 per year to work with beginning and struggling teachers.
 - Teachers new to the system, whether inexperienced or experienced, and teachers who struggle with reform model implementation requirements will be given intensive support through training and coaching by school leaders, RESA consultants, and instructional coaches.

- Substitute teachers will be utilized to provide release time when teachers need to engage in additional training, observe in a model teacher’s room, or participate in collaborative planning.

- Elective teachers or certified tutors will monitor students during tutorials (i.e., Knights’ Time, a 30 minute extended time slot each day after lunch for all students), one day a week so core content teachers will have interdisciplinary collaborative planning time.

- A flexible work schedule to enhance working conditions what will support staff members will be instituted. Teachers will keep a log of participation in whole group collaborative planning, leadership meetings, and content area collaborative planning that occur beyond the end of the work day. Staff will be allowed to use the collected time to arrive late or leave early on days where this would not interfere with the operation of a safe and orderly learning environment.

- In the interest of providing the highest quality education to the students of Stewart County Middle School, any teacher who fails to successfully implement strategies will be placed on a professional development plan for a period of not less than one year. Failure to meet the terms of the professional development plan within the year will result in non-renewal of the teacher's contract.

Reform Strategy 6: Researched-Based Instructional Program

Goal: Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards.²⁴

The instructional program will focus on targeted areas from the GAPSS Report, the School Improvement Plan, and the Department of Education's Short Term Action Plans. Focused target areas will include: 1) further expansion of teacher's collaborative work to design consistent and authentic common assessments; 2) increase the use of diagnostic assessments at the unit level and the identification of related instructional interventions, such as flexible groups; 3) increase the use of differentiated instruction; 4) increase the use of 21st century technology to augment teaching and learning; and 5) increase the use of higher order thinking skills. Reform strategies to accomplish these goals are as follows:^{25, 26, 27, 28, 29}

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Marzano, R. (2003). What works in schools: Translating research into action. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Over a three year period, the staff will be trained by Karen Bailey, Educational Consultant, on building assessment literacy, developing common assessments, and using assessment data to differentiate instruction. Chattahoochee-Flint professional learning consultants will provide job-embedded professional learning and implementation support to teachers by facilitating the coaching cycle, with the collaborative support of the math specialist and a math consultant. The instructional technology specialist will demonstrate for teachers how to embed technology into lessons by utilizing various technology tools and equipment to include student response systems (clickers) and mimeos (portable promethean boards).
- Each nine weeks Data Teams will review disaggregated formative and summative data from pretests, daily assessments, benchmarks, report cards, and state tests to help teacher inform/adjust instruction. Teachers will meet each Tuesday in study groups to receive training and analyze student data. Teachers will be provided release time during the day for mandatory professional training and to conduct peer observations. Teachers will also be paid stipends for training on off-contract days. Students will analyze their own assessments, maintain a differentiated learning log to determine their areas of weaknesses and strengths, and set personal learning targets.
- Students will be assigned to daily support classes in reading/language arts and math based on CRCT and report card data. Student mastery of the standards will be documented using a standards-based grade book format which will readily identify standards and elements students have or have not met. Based on that information, teachers will be able to plan instruction for flexible small groups, one-on-one tutoring, or differentiated whole group instruction. A pretest (diagnostic test) will be given for each unit so teachers will know how to activate students' prior knowledge, build conceptual foundations, and select authentic examples and illustrations for lessons. The pretest data also provides baseline data from which to assess student learning. Various types of formative assessments (e.g., selected responses, constructed responses, performance tasks, observations, and conversations), will be utilized throughout the study of each unit.

²⁶ Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 80, (2), 139-149.

²⁷ Tomlinson, C. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Response to the needs of all learners*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

²⁸ Caldwell, J. E. "Clickers in the large classroom: Current research and best-practice tips," *Life Sciences Education* 6 (2007): 9-20.

²⁹ Report of the National Reading Panel (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. Washington, D.C: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Based on formative assessment data, teachers will have clear roadmaps for designing ensuing instruction.

- Students who do not meet standards in the classroom will be provided additional instruction during extended learning time during the school day (Knights' Time), after-school, Attendance Camp, and Saturday School. All instruction will be provided by certified teachers and paraprofessionals. All students will have access to the media center and computer lab after school.
- Summer Academy Camps will be established for those incoming freshmen who failed the Eighth Grade Writing Test and for students failing core subjects. Summer camps will operate through the months of June and July with selected students attending specific camps for five to ten days.
- Special Education and at-risk students will attend a transition camp five days prior to the opening of school in order to develop vocabulary and content awareness for the first units in core classes. High performing students will have the opportunity to participate in enrichment programs via Virtual School and in the regular classrooms at the school.
- An academy (Hope Academy) will be implemented to provide an alternate route for certain students to complete their academic requirements. This academy will be open to, but not limited to, older students who have a high absentee rating, child care responsibilities, and other difficulties in the regular school setting. Participants will be selected by the Student Support Team, chaired by the graduation coach.

Reform Strategy 7: Use of Data

Goal: Promote the continuous use of student data (e.g., formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.³⁰

The GAPSS Analysis indicated there should be an increase in the use of diagnostic assessments at the unit level so teachers will be able to gauge students' understanding of major content/concepts before instruction actually begins. The school will implement several strategies to strengthen the use of data:

- A Data Team consisting of the various disciplines (Study Groups) will be organized and is responsible for: 1) collecting and charting data from diagnostic (pre-test) assessments; 2) determining the strengths and weaknesses of students' performance on the

³⁰Op. cit., U.S. Department of Education (2010). Guidance on School Improvement Grants Under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

assessments; 3) establishing learning goals for students; 4) selecting instructional strategies, 5) determining how results will be collected; and 6) maintaining curriculum and instruction notebooks (GPS notebook and data notebooks).

- The staff will meet regularly in teams during Tuesday Study Groups to examine what achievement may look like in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science by following a well established protocol for meeting and making decisions. To ensure standards are being met with rigor, teachers will begin the process of examining student work, determine any achievement gaps, calculate the percentage of students reading on grade level, and which students require intervention.
- GLRS and the school's leadership staff will facilitate Study Groups in the implementation and review of appropriate use of data to inform instruction. In order to build capacity and provide sustainability, teachers, as they are ready, will become leaders of the collaborative study teams.
- During the teaching of instructional units, teachers will administer formative assessment frequently. The guidance from the RESA professional learning consultant, the monitoring and feedback from instructional coaches, and the collaboration of teacher teams will inform and differentiate the instructional process. At the conclusion of a unit, a post-assessment will be administered and the Study Teams will determine if learning goals have been met and determine next steps for students who did not reach proficiency on the assessment. Students who do not meet their learning goals will be offered additional help through tutorials, after-school sessions, intercession, and Saturday School.

Reform Strategy 8: Increased Learning Time

Goal: Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time which will enhance student learning and performance and increase the graduation rate.³¹

Increased learning time means using a longer school day, week, or year schedule to significantly increase the total number of school hours to include additional time for instruction in core academic subjects and other subjects, enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education, and time for teachers to collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development within and across grades and subjects. To address the need to increase the length of the school day, Stewart County Middle School will institute the following:

- All students will be enrolled in a study skills course called "Knights Time." Through this course, students will be provided an additional 35 minutes of instruction per day. The course will be a formative-assessment

³¹ *Ibid.*

driven course that uses flexible grouping to remediate and accelerate all students. This class will use programs such as Virtual Learning, Study Island, Success Maker, and USA Test Prep. The instructional technology specialist will collaborate with teachers and support students.

- More support classes for science, math, and ELA will be scheduled for students who have identified weaknesses. Students will be scheduled into support classes based on formative and summative assessments such as CRCT, benchmarks, and classroom data.
- All teachers and students will participate in an additional week of intercessory instruction after spring break that will include enrichment, remediation, or acceleration.
- To enhance student learning and performance and ultimately to increase the graduation rate, several strategies will be implemented:
 - Saturday School and Attendance Camp will be held for students who struggle to meet the academic standards, at-risk of failing a course, need CRCT tutoring, and/or have attendance issues. Saturday School is from 9:00a.m.—3:00p.m. and Attendance Camp is from 3:30p.m.—6:30p.m. after school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.
 - At-risk students and students with disabilities, will be accelerated five days prior to the first day of school. Pretests from Unit 1 for the next grade level will be given to students to determine their areas of weaknesses to front load learning so students will have a “head start” on the lessons.
 - Student incentives will include: guest speakers, career days, field trip fees, special interest clubs, career fairs, dances, lock-ins, presentations, trophies, and videos. Plans are currently being implemented to establish a fully equipped community career center using state of the art technology for students and parents.

Reform Strategy 9: Family and Community Engagement

Goal: Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.³²

The recent GAPSS Analysis identified the need for more involvement from both parents and the community. Stewart County Middle School believes when schools support family involvement both at home and in school, students achieve at higher levels. To ensure an effective partnership between the school and the parents and between the school and the community, a Family Community Specialist was hired to reach out, communicate, and work with parents, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties with the greater community. The specialist has many duties and responsibilities:

³² *Ibid.*

- Survey parents and the community to identify areas of need.
- Ensure that parents feel welcome by creating a warm, family-friendly atmosphere and provide opportunities for volunteering.
- Assist in engaging the school and the family in meaningful communication about all areas of student learning—learning expectations, extended learning opportunities, formative assessment progress, grades, discipline, and attendance.
- Link community resources, organize support from community partners, and work closely with faith-based and community organizations to strengthen families and students.
- Initiate parent participation in “*Be There*” campaign supported through the Georgia School Superintendents Association and the Georgia Department of Education.
- Initiate participation in a social networking website provided by the Georgia Department of Education. Through this process, parent will have the opportunity to be involved in the function of the school without having to actually attend school functions.
- Stress to families the vital importance of regular student attendance at school.
- Mail correspondence to parents, making home visits, ensuring effective communication between the school and the home, coordinating calendars and events with the elementary and middle schools to eliminate potential conflicts.
- Host monthly parent workshops based on needs, especially in the area of parental skills training.
- Transport parents and students when needed.
- Promote the theme of the school’s reform effort, “Embracing Our Community”.
- Work closely with the Graduation Coach to ensure that students graduate on time.
- Develop a parent incentive plan to include financial planning and career assistance programs, GED program information and preparation resources, community activities, parent socials for networking and celebrations.

3. INSTRUCTION BY HIGHLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL STAFF

All students at Stewart County Middle School are instructed by highly qualified professional teachers. Currently, 100% of the teachers and paraprofessionals are certified and highly qualified according to standards established by the State of Georgia.

STRATEGIES TO ATTRACT HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS TO HIGH-NEEDS SCHOOLS

Administrative personnel actively recruit prospective teachers. The school advertises job vacancies in the local newspaper, *The Stewart-Webster Journal* and on the Teach Georgia website. Due to the proximity to Alabama, Stewart-County High School has been fortunate to recruit highly qualified retired teachers from out of state. Due to recent budget cuts resulting in teacher lay-offs, Stewart County Middle School has had many applications for employment.

Stewart County School System offers a base salary plus a local supplement that is comparable to other districts in the area. In addition, the system provides a signing bonus in areas of critical need. Teachers who meet and/or exceed system expectations for student achievement and graduation are given incentive bonuses. If necessary, the system will also assist teachers in the H1 B VISA process.

The high poverty and rural location of Stewart County Middle School have made it difficult to recruit, place, and retain qualified teachers in critical subject. Therefore, in order to achieve a consistent and cohesive staff, Stewart County Middle School has implemented thoughtful, sustained, and systematic approaches to teacher recruitment, development, and support. The approaches include: 1) revamping pre-service preparation programs; 2). considering more innovative and coordinated approaches to teacher recruitment; 3). creating a flexible work schedule; 4) offering a package of financial incentives;5) implementing a systematic and supportive induction process for the early years of teaching; and 6) adjusting the schedule to allow for maximum collaboration. (Additional information is detailed in Question 2.)

Many factors attract highly qualified teachers to Stewart County Middle School. The school is led by experienced administrators with vast repertoires of instructional knowledge and who subscribe to the philosophy of shared leadership with the staff. Small class sizes that do not exceed state mandatory sizes, adequate instructional materials and supplies, cutting edge technology, and a modern, spacious facility insure conditions conducive to teaching and learning. Because of the small faculty size, teachers have the opportunity to be directly involved in decision-making concerning curriculum, instruction, professional learning, and school governance.

Professional learning is offered onsite, is job-embedded, and relevant to teachers' assignments. Innovative teaching strategies, teaching and learning flexibility, and teacher autonomy, all of which are supported and encouraged by the administration, are challenging, but rewarding opportunities provided to teachers.

To help teachers acclimate to teaching at the school, all teachers with less than three years of experience are assigned a mentor. Teachers new to the system, whether inexperienced or experienced, and teachers who struggle with teaching and learning, are given intensive support through training and coaching by school leaders, RESA consultants, and instructional coaches.

The culture at Stewart County Middle School is characterized as a place of trust, collegiality, and collective responsibility for student learning. Teachers celebrate student success and place a high priority on supporting student learning. Whenever personnel leave the system, they are asked to complete exit interview questions to enhance the system's recruitment and retention efforts and to assess the overall quality of the work culture.

ADDRESSING CERTIFICATION DEFICIENCIES

If prospective teachers are not certified according to state guidelines, the system works aggressively to obtain certification and high quality status. Non-certified teachers are offered an opportunity to participate in the GTAPP (Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program) through Chattahoochee-Flint RESA. Teachers also can obtain needed course work through area colleges and universities.

The system provides all teachers and paraprofessionals annual certification updates to reflect certification and Highly-Qualified requirements. In addition, they are provided information on the GACE (Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators), registration fees, and professional learning opportunities at Chattahoochee-Flint RESA and within the school system.

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF TO ENABLE ALL CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOL TO MEET PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, parents, and other staff members have been included in professional learning that addresses the root causes of the school's identified needs.

Stewart County Middle School understands the importance of quality professional development that improves teacher content knowledge and pedagogy as well as increases student achievement. The school's administrative staff will attend all professional learning activities, not only to sharpen their own instructional and management skills, but to demonstrate the importance of all instructional staff learning new skills and techniques necessary to educate diverse populations. In addition, leadership staff will attend monthly administrator meetings with the Superintendent. Paraprofessionals and other staff members will be included in trainings appropriate for their job duties. Parents are equal partners with the school, and professional

learning provided by the Family Community Specialist and Title I Parent Involvement Coordinator will be a vital resource for increasing parental understanding of standards-based teaching and learning and the importance of being actively involved with the school.

Stewart County Middle School has aligned professional learning with the State's academic content standards (GPS) and student academic achievement standards (CRTC).

High impact, research-based professional learning activities are implemented with the expectation that they will have substantial, measurable, and positive impact on academic achievement. Attendees will embrace the context for professional learning that improves results for students by designing and engaging in cycles of inquiry, reflection, analysis, and action.

Resources are sufficient to carry out effective professional learning activities that address the root causes of academic and institutional needs.

The Stewart County School District has the capacity to use Title I-Part A, Title II-A, Title IV, Title VI-B and Title I School of Distinction funds to provide adequate resources and related support to focus on target areas as determined by the most recent GAPSS findings (February 2010). Teachers will be provided appropriate resources, as well as intensive training on the effective use of specified resources for the primary purpose of increasing the graduation rate. Securing external and internal agencies to train teachers and top-quality instructors to guide teachers in the best use of research-based strategies for raising the graduation rate will be a top priority. Resources will be aligned with target areas to include technology, equipment, and supplies.

External technical assistance will include the following:

- A national educational consultant, Karen Bailey, who specializes in helping schools increase student achievement
- A Professional Learning Specialist, ETTC Technology Specialist, and School Improvement Specialist from Chattahoochee-Flint RESA
- Special Services consultants from Georgia Learning Resource Systems (GLRS)
- School Improvement Specialists from the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) and the Georgia Department of Education

Internal technical assistance will include:

- Math Specialist
- Graduation Specialist
- Family and Community Specialist
- Instructional Technology Specialist
- Title I Parent Involvement Coordinator

Stewart County Middle School has included teachers in professional learning activities regarding the use of academic assessments to enable them to provide information on, and to improve, the achievement of individual students and the overall instructional program in the following ways:

School and district administrators regularly collaborate with all staff members to elicit input and provide opportunities for shared decision-making and problem solving to ensure accountability. The selection of the Transformation Reform model used a shared-decision making process to conclude that aggressive and significant reforms needed to be implemented if Stewart County Middle School was to provide a quality education for students. Refer to Questions 2, 7, and 11 for detailed explanations of how teachers are involved in professional learning on the role assessment plays in increasing student achievement and improving the overall instructional program.

Included below is the three year proposed Professional Learning Plan for instructional staff: Building A Data-Informed Culture with Educational Consultant, Karen Bailey.

Year 1: Building Assessment Literacy (conducted during SY 2010-2011)

- Day 1: Building Assessment Literacy—Why Are We Assessing?
- Day 2: Building Assessment Literacy—What Are We Assessing? (Unpacking Standards)
- Day 3: Exploring the Four Assessment Methods
- Day 4: Seven Strategies for Utilizing Formative Assessment
- Day 5: The Power of Data Teams

Year 2: Developing Common Formative Assessments (SY 2011-2012)

- Day 1: The Power of Formative Assessments
- Day 2: Steps to Build Common Assessments
- Day 3: Examining Data for Next Step Planning
- Day 4: Involving Students in the Assessment and Learning Process

Year 3: Using Assessment Data to Differentiate Instruction (SY 2012-2013)

- Day 1: Assessment Construction and Item Design for Differentiation
- Day 2: Refining Assessments Based Upon Student Data
- Day 3: Collecting Best Practice for Differentiation
- Day 4: Building Data Teams to Sustain Data-Informed Culture

The three year proposed Professional Learning Plan for leadership staff: Building A Data-Informed Culture with Educational Consultant, Karen Bailey, is as follows:

Year 1: Building a Data-Informed Culture (SY 2010-2011)

- 5 days on on-site Professional Development
- 1 day (3 two-hour coaching sessions) delivered on site or virtually throughout the year

Year 2: Building a Data-Informed Culture (SY 2011-2012)

- 4 days on on-site Professional Development
- 1 day (3 two-hour coaching sessions) delivered on site or virtually throughout the year

Year 3: Building a Data-Informed Culture (SY 2012-2013)

- 4 days on on-site Professional Development
- 1 day (3 two-hour coaching sessions) delivered on site or virtually throughout the year

5. STRATEGIES TO INCREASE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents have been involved in the planning, review, and improvement of the comprehensive Title I school wide plan. They have served on committees with school personnel to review descriptions of the eighteen criteria required for the plan, have evaluated the effectiveness of the FY 2010-11 school wide plan, and made suggestions for improvement for the current year (2011-12). Copies of the plan will be available at the annual Title I meeting for parental approval and parental workshops for perusal. Parents will play a vital role in the implementation of the plan by providing feedback through an annual survey, evaluations of workshops and parental meetings, and through their volunteering efforts to assist the school.

Stewart County Middle School developed a Parent Involvement Action Plan to provide parents opportunities to play an active part in the educational process of their child while enrolled at the school. The school has identified six focal areas for achieving its goal. Those areas are: (1)

communication, (2) parenting, (3) student learning, (4) volunteering, (5) decision-making and advocacy, and (6) collaborating with the community.³³

Communication

Communication between home and the school should be regular, two-way, and meaningful. The school utilizes various forms of communication throughout the year to assure this happens. A family compact is signed at the beginning of the school year between the student, parent, and teacher which defines goals, expectations, and shared responsibilities of each partner for student learning. School calendars, monthly newsletters, the Student and Parent Handbook, and sundry parent notices are sent to homes via traditional means (e.g., printed copies) as well as through the school's website and the local newspaper, *The Stewart Webster Journal*, to inform parents about upcoming school events. Student Support Team weekly conferences, phone calls, emails, monthly Expectation Reports, monthly progress reports, and quarterly report cards provide dual communications about individual students' academic performance and behavior. The annual Opening Ceremony, monthly Parent Conversations, and various parental workshops are used to further effective and efficient communication.

Parenting Skills

Parenting skills are promoted and supported within the school through a variety of resources. Throughout the year, parental workshops are held in the Parent Resource Room and Parent Technology Lab. These workshops are offered to provide assistance in using on-line resources at home, such as OAS (Georgia's Online Assessment System) and USA Test Prep, internet sites designed to provide CRCT practice opportunities. Other workshops involve helping parents understand how their child can use the web-based program, Study Island, at home to practice core math and reading skills. Other sessions are held to upgrade parents' skills in setting up and using email and monitoring their child's use of Face Book and other internet sites. Various topical issues such as safety, abuse, and bullying awareness are also highlighted.

Student Learning

Student learning is a top priority for both the school and parents. Research by Epstein clearly supports the critical role of parents in the development of a child's education.³⁴ Therefore, the school diligently seeks parental assistance at home in order to help students accomplish their

³³ Epstein, J. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

³⁴ Ibid.

learning goals. Parents are urged to assist students with test preparation, academic skills building, homework, and various content-related projects. When parents assist with student learning, they have the opportunity to share in the learning process with their child and to follow up on events that happen at the school and in the classroom. Many resources are provided for parents by the school and through internet websites.

Volunteering

Stewart County Middle School strongly believes that parental involvement is very important in a child's education. Students with parents who are involved in their school tend to have fewer behavioral problems and better academic performance. Epstein's research definitively shows that these students are also more likely to complete some form of secondary education.³⁵ By interacting with teachers, administrators, and other parents on a regular basis, parents gain a firsthand understanding of their child's daily activities. Additionally, volunteers serve as public relations agents for the school by sharing with the community the good things the school is doing, as well as troubleshooting misconceptions or misunderstandings that may be prevalent. When a parent is involved and comes to school on a regular basis, it shows the child that school and home are connected, and that school is a part of the whole family's life.

Decision-Making and Advocacy

Another priority for increasing parental involvement in the school is to structure a process whereby parents are directly involved in decision-making and advocacy. Because parents are full partners in the educational issues that affect children and families, participating in school improvement processes, such as the Title I School Wide planning and implementation, parent involvement planning, parent conferencing, and stakeholders' meetings are used to facilitate discussions and make the best decisions for school related issues.

Collaborating With Community

School-community partnerships interconnect many resources and strategies to enhance Stewart County Middle School's support all children and their families. The partnerships with local community agencies and businesses yield many benefits for both the school and the community in general. For example some of these benefits are: sharing resources, collaborative fund raising, volunteer assistance, information sharing, recognition and public relations, shared responsibility

³⁵ Ibid.

for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and services, and building a greater, more cohesive sense of community.

Stewart County Middle School Parent Involvement Policy Action Plan FY 2011-2012 Updated: August 25, 2011		
Communication Communication between home and the school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.		
What	How	How Often
Student-Parent-School Compact	Printed copy sent home	Yearly
Student Handbook	Printed copy sent home	Yearly
School Calendar	Printed copy sent home	Yearly
School Newsletter	Printed copy sent home School's website Local newspaper articles	Monthly Monthly Weekly

Expectation Reports	Emailed or mailed	Monthly
Progress Reports	Mailed	Monthly
Report Cards	Mailed	Each 9-weeks
Parent Contact	Conferences, emails, written notes, phone calls	Periodically as needed
Parent Conferences	SST Meetings	Each Wednesday
Parent Notices	Printed flyers, invitations, and school website	Periodically as needed
Opening Ceremony	Printed flyers, newspaper article, website	Annually
Parent Conversations	Meeting at school	Monthly
Parent Workshops	Class sessions in Parent Resource Center	Monthly

Parenting
Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

What	How	How Often
Technology Workshop	Class session in Parent Technology Lab	Monthly workshop
Study Island	Class session in Parent Resource Center	Monthly workshop
USA Test Prep	Class session in Parent Resource Center	Monthly workshop
Carnegie Learning (Math)	Class session in Parent Resource Center	Monthly
Safety/Abuse/Bullying Awareness	Newsletter, website	Sent home annually

Student Learning
Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

Concept/Domain	How	When/Where
CRCT Preparation	OAS USA Test Prep Test study package	At home, on-line
Content Skills Practice	Study Island	At home, on-line
Homework Assistance	Assisting/checking/monitoring	At home
Reading	Encourage reading Reading Counts	At home, library On-line resource
Math Skills	Practice for mastery	At home, website on-line resources
Science and Social Studies Projects	Assisting/checking/monitoring	At home

Safety/Abuse/Bullying Awareness	Home discussions and parental monitoring	At home
Volunteering Parents are welcomed in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.		
Activity/Event	How	When/Where
Support Various School Programs	Parent Volunteers	Annually
Classroom Projects	Parent Volunteers	Throughout the year
Athletic Banquet	Parent Volunteers	Annually
Field Day	Parent Volunteers	Annually
Awards Day/Honors Day	Parent Volunteers	Annually
CAB (Caring Adults in the Building)	Parent Volunteers	Monthly
Decision Making and Advocacy Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.		
School Improvement Planning	Committee Meetings	Quarterly or monthly
Parent Involvement	Surveys/Questionnaires	Annually
Parent Conferencing	Meetings	As needed/requested
Stakeholders' Meeting	Meetings	Bi-annually
Assisting the School	Parent Council	Monthly
Awareness of School Issues	School Board Meetings Title I Meeting	Monthly Annually
Attendance Camp for Absenteeism	Parental Support by Sending Students	Monthly
Board of Education Advisory Committee	School and community support	As needed
Collaborating with Community Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.		
Resource/Agency/Business	Used How	How Often
Health Department	Family/student support	As needed
Parks Memorial Library	Family/student support	As needed
DFACS	Family/student support	As needed
Family Connections	Family/student support	As needed
Ebenezer Baptist Church Christian Center	Tutoring	As needed

Included in the appendix are copies of the Stewart County Middle School's Parent Involvement Policy, the Home-School Compact, and the Parent Involvement checklist.

6. PLANS FOR ASSISTING PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE TRANSITION FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS TO LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Stewart County Middle School has a transition plan for students entering high school. Through collaboration and joint planning, the faculties of the middle and high school sponsor eighth grade orientation in late spring designed to help students transition from middle school to high school. The orientation consists of classroom visits and presentations/discussions with the Graduation Coach, Counselor, and Principal. Additionally, incoming freshmen who failed the Eighth Grade Writing Test attend a Summer Academy Camp. The camp operates through the months of June and July with students attending up to ten days.

Students who enter from private or other schools, including previously home schooled students, and their parents will be provided with an orientation, as all students are as they are initially enrolled in the school. A tour of the school and pertinent information will be given to the student

and his/her parents. A request for previous academic records will be requested to ensure the correct placement of the student.

7. MEASURES TO INCLUDE TEACHERS IN THE DECISIONS REGARDING THE USE OF ASSESSMENT TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON, AND TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AND THE OVERALL ALL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

According to Kellough, “Teaching and learning are reciprocal processes that depend on and affect one another. Thus, the assessment component deals with how well the students are learning and how well the teacher is teaching”.³⁶

Since Stewart County Middle School has embraced the Georgia Performance Standards curriculum, teachers provide instruction on units which support standards/frameworks and follow a year-long pacing guide. Based on the GAPSS Analysis, lesson plans were aligned with GPS/QCC in 85% of classrooms observed. An ensuing recommendation indicated there should

³⁶ Kellough, Richard. (2007). Teaching and learning K-8:A guide to methods and resources. Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall.

be an increase in the use of diagnostic assessments at the unit level so teachers will be able to gauge students' understanding of major content/concepts before instruction actually begins. Therefore, teachers were asked to collaboratively prepare or revise and consistently use unit pretests and common post-assessments.

During the teaching of instructional units, teachers administer formative assessment frequently. The guidance from the RESA professional learning consultant, the monitoring and feedback from instructional coaches, and the collaboration of teacher teams informs and differentiates the instructional process.

A Data Team consisting of the various disciplines (Study Groups) was organized and is responsible for: 1) collecting and charting data from diagnostic (pre-test) assessments; 2) determining the strengths and weaknesses of students' performance on the assessments; 3) establishing learning goals for students; 4) selecting instructional strategies, 5) determining how results will be collected; and 6) maintaining curriculum and instruction notebooks (GPS notebook and data notebooks).

GLRS and the school's leadership staff facilitate Study Groups in the implementation and review of appropriate use of data to inform instruction. In order to build capacity and provide sustainability, teachers, as they are ready, become leaders of the collaborative study teams

The staff meets regularly in teams during Tuesday Study Groups to examine what achievement may look like in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science by following a well established protocol for meeting and making decisions. To ensure standards are being met with rigor, teachers begin the process of examining student work, determine any achievement gaps, calculate the percentage of students reading on grade level, and which students require intervention.

8. COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL PROGRAMS

List of state and local educational agency programs and other federal programs:

Stewart County School System integrates federal, state, and local services and programs. Stewart County Middle School receives federal funding through various Title programs which include Title I-Part A, Title II- Part A, Title II-Part D, Title IV-Part A, Title IV—Part B, and Title VI—Part B, IDEA, and Distinguished School funds.

QBE (Quality Basic Education) funds are used to fund programs and staff as required by the State's QBE statute (e.g., salaries, management and operations, professional learning, transportation). SPLOST (Special Local Option Sales Tax) funds were used to supplement QBE support until FY 2011-2012 when local voters rejected the passage of SPLOST funding.

Description of how resources from Title I will be used:

Stewart County Middle School uses Title I funds in a supplementary manner to provide intensive academic support services designed to improve student achievement in meeting state and federal standards in math and reading. Title I monies are used to pay salaries and benefits for supplementary Title I teachers. Other expenditures include the purchase of site licenses for *Visual Thesaurus*, *USA Test Prep*, and *Study Island*. Funds support transportation for field trips during the Spring Intercession, summer camps, and after school programs. In addition, parent involvement activities, including a system-wide Title I Parent Involvement Coordinator are funded through Title I.

Coordinated planning with other programs:

The Title I plan is developed in coordination with other programs, including those under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act, and National and Community Service Act of 1990.

9. ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCE DIFFICULTY MASTERING STANDARDS SHALL BE PROVIDED WITH EFFECTIVE, TIMELY ASSISTANCE

Stewart County Middle School recognizes the urgency in responding to students who experience difficulty mastering standards. Three strategies are simultaneously implemented to address this area of concern: (1) Identifying students' difficulties in a timely manner; (2) Providing periodic training and support for teachers in identifying difficulties; (3) Conducting parent-teacher conferences detailing what the school will do to help the students, what parents can do to help, and additional resources available at the school or in the community to assist families.

1. Identifying students' difficulties in a timely manner:

- Students are assigned to daily support classes in ELA and Math based on CRCT and report card data.

- Students who do not meet standards in the classroom are provided additional instruction during extended learning time during the school day (Knights' Time), after-school, Attendance Camp, and Saturday School.
- Summer Academy Camps are established for incoming freshmen who failed the Eighth Grade Writing Test and for students failing core subjects.
- All students participate in a one week intersession after spring break for remediation, acceleration, or enrichment.
- At-risk and students with disabilities are accelerated five days prior to the first day of school.

2. Periodic training for teachers in the identification of difficulties and appropriate assistance for identified difficulties:

- Karen Bailey, an Educational Consultant, will train the staff on building assessment literacy, developing common assessments, and using assessment data to differentiate instruction.
- Chattahoochee-Flint RESA professional learning consultant, in collaborative support of the Math Coach and Math Consultant, provide job-embedded professional learning and implementation support to teachers by facilitating the coaching cycle.
- The system's instructional technology specialist assists teachers in embedding technology into lessons.
- GLRS provides training and support to special education teachers as well as regular classroom co-teachers on using assistive technology, writing appropriate Individual Education Plans (IEP), establishing criteria for Extended School Year, writing appropriate transition plans, and compliance issues

3. Teacher-parent conferences that detail what the school will do to help the student:

- The staff at Stewart County Middle School seeks to inform and reassure parents they are doing many things to help students. Some priority areas are as follows:

- Best practices for standard based teaching and learning will be consistently and pervasively used in all classrooms.
- All students will be taught a viable curriculum, the Georgia Performance Standards.
- A safe, bully-free environment will be maintained at all times which will be conducive to teaching and learning.
- Frequent progress monitoring will occur, and prompt intervention strategies will be implemented based on data.
- All school personnel welcome parents and will gladly meet with them to discuss issues relating to their child's education.

4. Teacher-parent conferences that detail what the parent can do to help the student:

The administration and instructional staff realize they cannot educate children without the active, on-going involvement of parents. Invaluable parental support is manifested when parents willingly resolve to assist the school by doing the following:

- Monitor academic and behavioral progress closely by paying special attention to homework assignments, Expectation Reports, progress reports, and report cards.
- Attend requested parent-teacher conferences.
- Access the Open Door policy at Stewart County Middle School and frequently communicate with the school.
- Send children to school regularly, on time, for the entire day, and schedule appointments after school when possible.
- Become actively involved in school by volunteering in classrooms and supporting school activities.

5. Teacher-parent conferences that detail additional assistance available to the student at the school or in the community:

The school seeks to inform parents about additional assistance available at the school and in the community. Some additional resources include:

- Study Island, USA Test Prep, and OAS, computer programs used at school, are web-based and can be accessed at home via the internet. Power School, an electronic grade book, also accessible via the internet, is available to parents for checking the academic status of their child.
- Teachers are available after school to assist students who need further instruction.
- Community resources include DFACS, Family Connections, Parks Memorial Library, Stewart County Health Department, and Columbus Technical College's dual enrollment opportunities.

10. DESCRIPTION OF HOW INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO PARENTS

Stewart County Middle School continually provides assessment results to inform all parents of student achievement. Ongoing assessment of student achievement and communication about assessment are available to parents through expectation report cards, mid-term progress reports, and report cards.

Expectation report cards are sent to parents at the beginning of the school term explaining the school's expectations for academics, behavior and attendance. Every week another copy of the expectation report card goes home for non-performers. Progress reports are sent home every four and one-half weeks, and report cards go home every nine weeks. Teachers communicate directly with parents through telephone calls, teacher web pages, notes sent home, and email as they monitor student progress. Also, state provided brochures about testing are sent home. Parent conferences are regularly scheduled, and parents may request conferences any time.

Great effort is expended to draw students into the assessment process. Stewart County Middle School believes that informed students will further inform parents. Students are given a syllabus for each course that lists content standards and descriptors, course expectations, requirements, and evaluations. Students attend test awareness sessions to receive informational brochures about state assessments and instruction for interpreting results. Early in the semester students attend orientation sessions to discuss content domains and how to establish and meet SMART Goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound) for the CRCT.

11. PROVISIONS FOR THE COLLECTION AND DISAGGREGATION OF DATA ON THE ACHIEVEMENT AND ASSESSMENT RESULTS OF STUDENTS

The system testing coordinator ensures that all state level testing data is collected according to state guidelines. The Georgia Department of Education and the Governor's Office of Student Accountability disaggregate the data and provide documentation to the system and the school. School administrators review the data with the teachers and develop plans based on the outcomes to increase student achievement.

Teachers, under the supervision of administrators and curriculum and instructional specialists, analyze student data in several ways to ensure the establishment and continuation of the most appropriate curriculum for each grade level and each student. Data is viewed vertically to improve instruction and achievement on each grade level in each subject, while also ensuring that the student population continues to show gain on an individual basis. Trends of strengths and weaknesses are noted and addressed continually throughout the year using ongoing summative assessments, as well as formative assessments, such as benchmark tests, unit pre and post tests, and teacher made assessments.

Stewart County Middle School teachers keep Data Notebooks to archive assessment data on each student in every class. Examples of data include state test data, progress reports, report cards, attendance, expectation report cards, and benchmark assessments. Disaggregation of this data enables teachers to design and implement differentiated instruction and to help students set learning goals.

Achievement, attendance, and behavioral data are displayed on a Data Wall in the teacher workroom, as well as throughout the school on corridor walls. Results are posted in homerooms so that students can take ownership of their academic and social progress. The Graduation Coach and Counselor make presentations about disaggregated data to the faculty and staff at each grade level and by each subject. Teachers and students hold periodic celebrations to recognize accomplishments and progress toward goals.

12. PROVISIONS TO ENSURE THAT DISAGGREGATED ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR EACH CATEGORY ARE VALID AND RELIABLE

The state mandated assessments meet reliability and validity requirements, and are therefore, statistically sound and research based. Stewart County Middle School gives the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) and the Eighth Grade Writing Test. Annual results are compared to previous results to identify trends and patterns in the performance data. All test administration protocol established by the Georgia Department of Education is followed.

13. PROVISIONS FOR PUBLIC REPORTING OF DISAGGREGATED DATA

Stewart County Middle School communicates the assessment data to the students and parents in a timely manner. In addition, further public reporting of the data is endeavored through various means. The following list references methods the school uses to report test data to all stakeholders and the public in general.

- Individual student results are sent home to parents as soon as possible after the school receives disaggregated data from the Georgia Department of Education. Thorough explanations and parent friendly language are always used in reporting test data to parents. Teachers and administrators are available if further analysis or explanation is necessary.
- An annual Title I meeting is held to inform all stakeholders and other interested parties of state mandated test results.
- Monthly Title I parent meetings and trainings are utilized to share academic performance of the school.

- The support of Family Connections assists in maintaining a strong relationship between school and community.
- Information about school events is sent to the local area newspaper, *The Stewart Webster Journal*, for weekly publication.

14. PLAN DEVELOPED DURING A ONE YEAR PERIOD, UNLESS LEA, AFTER CONSIDERING THE RECOMMENDATION OF ITS TECHNICAL PROVIDERS, DETERMINES THAT LESS TIME IS NEEDED TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT THE SCHOOL-WIDE PROGRAM

Stewart County Middle School has been designated a school wide Title I school. This plan serves to review and update requirements for continued school wide status.

Stewart County Middle School staff and stakeholders review the school wide plan yearly and make changes in the plan as data indicate. If deemed necessary during the year, amendments to the school wide plan are assessed and addressed by the writing team.

15. PLAN DEVELOPED WITH THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY TO BE SERVED AND INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL CARRY OUT THE PLAN INCLUDING TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, OTHER SCHOOL STAFF, AND PUPIL SERVICE PERSONNEL, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS (IF SECONDARY)

The Stewart County Middle School Title I School Wide Plan is developed by stakeholders. Committees composed of administrators, teachers, staff, and parents meet to address each of the required eighteen components of the plan. Technical assistance is provided from the LEA, GADOE, and from an external Title I consulting firm, Educational Management Solutions, to review and revise, if necessary, all components set forth in Section 1114 of NCLB to address the needs of the school and to plan for annual evaluation of the plan.

The development of the plan involves input from different stakeholders. Community partners and parents provide contributions from the community. The principal, teachers, and other staff members are responsible for implementing the content of the plan within the school. Faculty and Study Group meetings provide for understanding of, fidelity to, and full implementation of the plan. The Title I planning committee reviews and approves the school wide plan. Copies are provided to all staff members, the School Council, and Board of Education. Copies are also available in the offices of the principal and Title I Director for parent and public perusal.

16. PLAN AVAILABLE TO LEA, PARENTS AND THE PUBLIC

The Stewart County Middle School Title I School Wide Plan is available to parents and other stakeholders upon request. A copy of the plan is easily accessible, being placed in the offices of the principal, Title I Director, Curriculum Director, Parent Involvement Coordinator, and Superintendent. Copies of the SWP are available to parents and other stakeholders at the annual Title I meeting and upon request. In addition, the local newspaper, *The Stewart Webster Journal*, publishes pertinent information about the school and its many programs.

17. PLAN TRANSLATED TO THE EXTENT FEASIBLE, INTO ANY LANGUAGE THAT A SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF THE PARENTS OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL SPEAK AS THEIR PRIMARY LANGUAGE

Stewart County Middle School respects all primary languages spoken in students' homes; however, at this time there are no homes that require translations. All written communication is

clearly stated and parent-friendly, with limited or no use of acronyms or other “professional” terminology that would be difficult for parents to understand.

In the event that students, with a need for translation in the home, enroll at Stewart County Middle School, the administration will ensure that the proper communication is made. The Southern Pines Migrant Education Agency, upon request, will provide Spanish speaking interpreters for migrant families. If interpreters are needed for languages other than Spanish, school personnel will search community resources. Moreover, the Transact program, provided to school systems by the Georgia Department of Education, is available for translation purposes.

18. PLAN IS SUBJECT TO THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROVISIONS OF SECTION 1116

Stewart County Middle School will abide by the requirements of the School Improvement provisions of Title I Section 1116. The Title I Director and other system and school level personnel will make every effort to provide the school with the necessary information and assistance in making school improvement.

**APPENDIX
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**Stewart County Middle School
Title I Parental Involvement Policy
Updated August 25, 2011**

Stewart County Middle School is committed to the goal of providing a quality education for all of its students with foremost emphasis on academic performance. We recognize the importance of, as well as the legal requirement for, implementing activities and procedures for the involvement of parents and the community.

In order to reach this goal, we believe partnerships should be established between the school, home, and community. Involvement shall include, but not be limited to, input into the planning, design, and implementation of the Parental Involvement Policy and continuous school improvement plans. It shall be the intent of all parental involvement activities to encourage and support the efforts of the home, school, and community in improving the academic achievement

and educational opportunities of all children. Activities held periodically during the school year may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The Stewart County Middle School's Title I Parent Involvement Policy will be developed jointly with, and distributed to parents of participating Title I students. The written plan will describe Parent Involvement Policy components as outlined in the Title I Section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) in clear and concise language that parents can understand. The written policy shall include provisions for periodic updating to reflect the changing needs of parents and the school, and it will be made readily available to the community. The written policy will be developed, reviewed, and approved through the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and distributed at the Title I Annual Meeting and Title I Parent Involvement meetings.
2. Stewart County Middle School will convene an annual meeting at a convenient time. All parents shall be invited and encouraged to attend through the school's newsletter, website, newspaper announcement, letters, flyers, and the school marquee. The meeting will inform parents of their school's participation under Title I, Part A, its requirements, and the parents' right to be involved.
3. Parent meetings will be offered throughout the school year. Meetings will be held at various times (mornings and evenings), and in various places so that all parents will have an opportunity to attend. Measures to eliminate parent involvement barriers will be addressed (e.g., transportation, child care, and home visits).
4. Stewart County Middle School will involve parents, guardians, and community members, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under Title I, including the school's parental involvement policy and the joint development of the school wide program plan delineated in Section 1114(b). Parents will be involved through the Parent Advisory Council, PTO, surveys, Annual Meeting, and parent involvement meetings, in the planning, design, and implementation, including all phases of the:
 - a. Needs assessment
 - b. Determination of program goals and objectives
 - c. Determination of educational strategies
 - d. Implementation of projects
 - e. Development of program applications, and
 - f. Program evaluations

5. Stewart County Middle School will provide parents of participating students timely information concerning:
- a. Title I programs in the school will be explained at the Annual Meeting, Open House, and with an article in the local newspaper.
 - b. Results of the annual school review including school performance profiles will be discussed at the Annual Meeting, Open House, and with an article in the local newspaper.
 - c. State brochures will be sent home with individual assessment results and how to interpret them. The administration and teachers will also be available to answer parent-specific questions concerning the testing.
 - d. A description and explanation of the school curriculum will be provided through the Student Handbook which will be distributed to all parents.
 - e. The assessments used to measure student progress and the proficiency levels the students are expected to meet will be explained in the Student Handbook.
 - f. Opportunities will be provided for regular meetings to formulate suggestions, share experiences with other parents and participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children. Parents will have opportunity to share ideas through the PTO, Parent Advisory Council, Parent Involvement workshops, and during various school events.
 - g. Timely responses to parent suggestions will be made. Responses will be forwarded to the Parent Involvement Coordinator, Parent Advisory Council, and the principal for consideration and/or implementation.
 - h. All unsatisfactory parent comments regarding the Title I School Wide Plan gathered at public meetings and from surveys will be forwarded to the Parent Involvement Coordinator who will share comments with the Parent Advisory Council, Title I Director, and the school's principal. Comments will be attached to the Title I School Wide Plan and submitted to the LEA.

6. Stewart County Middle School will provide assistance to parents in understanding the following:
 - a. National Education Goals
 - b. State content standards and student performance standards
 - c. School Improvement and corrective action process, if applicable
 - d. Components of the Stewart County Middle School's Title I School Wide Program
 - e. State of Georgia assessments and Stewart County Middle School's local assessments
 - f. Requirements of Title I, Part A
 - g. Ways parents can monitor their children's progress and work with educators to improve the performance of their children
 - h. Ways parents can participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.

The Annual Meeting, Open House, and various other meetings and workshops at the school will be planned to assist in understanding the above areas. The school's website, newspaper articles, phone calls, newsletters, conferences, and home visits, as needed, will be utilized. Stewart County Middle School will encourage parents to call their child's teachers when they are concerned about a problem. Teacher-Parent conferences will be scheduled to accommodate parents' schedules. Teachers will be encouraged to make frequent parent contacts.

7. Stewart County Middle School will provide parents with materials and training as needed in literacy, mathematics, and related areas, such as technology and science, to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement. Workshops will be offered and information will be distributed via the school's newsletter, school's website, letters, flyers, article in the local newspaper, and PTO.
8. Stewart County Middle School's Parent Involvement Coordinator and/or consultant will educate teachers, student support personnel, principals and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners. Stewart County Middle School will implement and coordinate parental involvement programs, and build ties between home and school. The education of above mentioned

individuals will occur at faculty meetings, grade level meetings, staff development sessions, and teacher workdays.

9. Stewart County Middle School will coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under Title I, Part A with Stewart County's Pre-K and Family Connection. The Title I Parental Involvement Coordinator will communicate directly and indirectly with these agencies through newsletters, phone conversations, and the Parent Advisory Council.
10. Stewart County Middle School will develop appropriate roles for civic and faith-based organizations, as well as businesses in parental involvement activities. This will include providing information about opportunities for organizations and businesses to work with parents and schools, and encouraging the formation of partnerships between the entities that include a role for parents. The Parent Involvement Coordinator, the Parent Advisory Council, and PTO will provide support to the school in this area.
11. A Parent Resource Center at Stewart County Middle School will be provided. A variety of parental educational opportunities will be provided for all parents in the school to learn about child development, child rearing issues, and other areas designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children. The Title I Parent Involvement Coordinator and the Parent Advisory Council will supervise and coordinate services.
12. Stewart County Middle School will involve parents in an ongoing and end-of-the year assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the parent involvement initiatives as a measure of performance evaluations of the school. Parents will complete Parent Involvement evaluations after each Parent Involvement meeting and the end-of-the-year Title I Parent Involvement Survey.
13. Stewart County Middle School will ensure, to the extent practical, full opportunities for the participation of the parents of LEP students, parents of migratory children, and parents with disabilities. Parents will be provided information on school profiles and information related to school and parent programs in an understandable and uniform format and in a language the parent can understand. The school will utilize the Southern Pine Migrant Education Agency for assistance in translating documents and meetings for Spanish speaking parents. The school will search additional community resources as needed for other languages.

14. NA
15. NA
16. NA
17. Stewart County Middle School will provide to the extent possible other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as parents may request.
18. Stewart County Middle School will involve parents in the joint development of the school-parent compact that outlines how parents will be responsible for supporting student learning. This will be done through the Annual Meeting, PTO, meeting and workshops provided by the Parent Involvement Coordinator, and the Parent Advisory Council.
19. Stewart County Middle School will describe its responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under Title I to meet Georgia's student performance goals in the development of the Student-Parent-Teacher Compact.
20. Stewart County Middle School will explain in the Student-Parent-Teacher Compact ways in which parents will be responsible for supporting their children's learning through such activities as: monitoring attendance, homework completion, and watching television; volunteering in the school or child's classroom; participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children; and the positive use of extra-curricular time.
21. Stewart County Middle School will address the importance of communication between teachers and parents in an ongoing basis through:
 - a. At a minimum, one annual Parent-Teacher conference will be held to discuss the Home-School Compact as it relates to the Title I student's achievement.
 - b. Frequent reports to parents on their child's progress will be communicated through weekly work folders, progress reports, report cards, and conferences.

- c. Reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's classes, and to observe classroom activities will be provided. Teachers will be available to meet individually with parents during planning periods, before and after school, and other scheduled times. The Parent Involvement Coordinator will conduct workshops on becoming a parent volunteer and discuss numerous ways parents' services can be utilized in the school. Parents will always be welcomed to visit classrooms to observe instruction and various classroom activities. Visitations will be scheduled through the office.

Check-List for School-Level Parental Involvement Policy

The Title I NCLB, Section 1118.NCLB, Parental Involvement Policy component of the School Plan submitted by Stewart County High School needs to give additional attention to the areas indicated below:

Met	Not Met	NA	Indicator	Notes
()	()	()	1. Develop jointly with, and distributed to, parents of participating children a written policy describing implementation of the requirements in a language that is simple, concise and jargon-free and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school, and such policy is made available to the local community.	
()	()	()	2. Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under Title I and to explain Title I, its requirements, and their right to be involved.	
()	()	()	3. Offer meetings using a flexible schedule, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide with funds provided under Title I, transportation, childcare, or home visits as such services relate to parental involvement to eliminate parent involvement barriers.	

Met	Not Met	NA	Indicator	Notes
()	()	()	4. Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs	

	<p>under Title I, including the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the school wide program plan under section 1114(b), except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of its programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children.</p>	
<p>() () () () () () () () () () () () () () () () () ()</p>	<p>5. Provide parents of participating students timely information concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Title I programs in the school b. Results of the annual school review including school performance profiles. c. Individual student assessment results and interpretation of those results. d. A description and explanation of the school curriculum. e. The assessments used to measure student progress and the proficiency levels the students are expected to meet. f. Opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions, share experiences with other parents and participate as appropriate in decisions relating to the education of their children. g. Provide timely responses to parent suggestions. h. Collect all unsatisfactory parent comments regarding the School wide Plan and attach those comments to the School Wide Plan when submitted to an LEA. 	

Met	Not Met	NA	Indicator	Notes
			6. Provide assistance to participating	

<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>parents in such areas as understanding the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. National Education Goals. b. State content standards and student performance standards. c. School improvement and corrective action process if applicable. d. Components of a school wide program if applicable. e. Components of a targeted assistance school program if applicable. f. State and local assessments. g. Requirements of Title I, Part A h. Ways parents can monitor their children’s progress and work with educators to improve the performance of their children. i. Ways parents can participate in decisions relating to the education of their children. 	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>7. Provide materials and training such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coordinating necessary literacy training and using technology from other sources to help parents work with their children to improve their children’s achievement. b. Training to help parents work with their children to improve their children’s achievement. 	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>8. Educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between home and school.</p>	

Met	Not Met	NA	Indicator	Notes
()	()	()	9. Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs, activities and strategies with Head Start, Even Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Title I-B Migrant, Title I-C, Homeless, Vocational Education, Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, Parents as Teachers Program, Public Preschool Programs and other programs, to the extent feasible and appropriate.	
()	()	()	10. Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities, including providing information about opportunities for organizations and businesses to work with parents and schools, and encouraging the formation of partnerships between elementary, middle, and secondary schools and local businesses that include a role for parents.	
()	()	()	11. Conduct other activities, as appropriate and feasible, such as parent resource centers and opportunities for parents to learn about child development and child rearing issues beginning at the birth of a child, that are designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children.	
()	()	()	12. Involve parents in an ongoing and end of year assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the parent involvement initiatives as a measure of performance evaluations of the school.	

Met	Not Met	NA	Indicator	Notes
()	()	()	13. To the extent practical, provide full opportunities for the participation of LEP parents, parents of migratory children, and parents of children with disabilities including providing school profiles and information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities in a language and format such parents understand.	
()	()	()	14. Involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, educators to improve effectiveness.	
()	()	()	15. Train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents.	
()	()	()	16. Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parent involvement.	
()	()	()	17. Provide other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as parents may request.	
()	()	()	18. Involve parents in the joint development of the school-parent compact that outlines how parents will be responsible for supporting student learning.	
()	()	()	19. Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under Title I to meet the	

	State's student performance standards.	
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Met	Not Met	NA	Indicator	Notes
()	()	()	20. Explain the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time.	
()	()	()	21. Address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement. b. Frequent reports to parents on their children's progress. c. Reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities. 	

Comments: _____

Signature of School Principal

Date

Signature of LEA Coordinator

Date

Stewart County Middle School
Student—Parent--Teacher Compact
Updated August 25, 2011

Stewart County School is committed to developing and graduating good citizens with high academic standards in a safe and caring environment. We are committed to fostering a literate community that values and supports education. It is our goal to create a safe and caring environment, to expect academic growth for all students, to promote good character, to promote continuous quality improvement and to continue to improve instructional strategies.

I. AS A STUDENT I WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

1. Showing respect and cooperating with all adults in the school.
2. Coming to class on time and prepared to work.
3. Respecting the rights of others to learn without distraction and disruption.
4. Showing respect for people and property by not using profanity, stealing, or vandalizing.
5. Practicing safety by not running, pushing, or fighting on campus.
6. Completing my assignments to the best of my ability.
7. Spending time at home daily studying or reading.

Comment: _____

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

II. AS A PARENT I WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

1. Providing adequate food and rest so my child is ready to learn.
2. Providing a time and place each evening for study or reading at home.
3. Helping my child in any way possible to meet his or her academic responsibilities.

Comment: _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

III. AS A TEACHER I WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

1. Providing instruction in the subject areas determined by the State of Georgia and the Stewart County Board of Education.
2. Providing a safe and pleasant atmosphere for learning.
3. Explaining assignments to student clearly.
4. Supplying clear evaluation of student progress and achievement to both students and parents.

Comment: _____

Teacher's Signature _____ Date _____

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