

To determine and describe specific student academic achievement needs, the Sumter County School System participates in the state testing programs annually including use of all of the following assessment tools: The Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Tests (CRCT) The Iowa Test of Basic Skills The Georgia Writing Tests The Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHGT) and End of Course Tests (EOCT) Middle Grades Writing Assessment (MWA) The Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program (GKAP) Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS for ELLs) W-APT The state checklist for eligibility in the Early Intervention Program (EIP) The DRA Test for monitoring students in EIP DIBELS Testgate (9 week pre/post tests) CRCT test results are used to determine Title I eligibility for students Student Support Teams monitor progress of struggling learners, diagnosing specific learning problems and providing interventions. Students not responding to tiered interventions receive comprehensive psychological assessment to determine eligibility for special education services. The eligibility requirements are examined at least every three years and, if needed, a comprehensive re-evaluation is carried out. The Professional Learning and Assessment Coordinator examines and disaggregates the test results of all students and subgroups and presents these results in forums to the School Board, local school staff members, parents, and community. Results shared with staff members at the local school level are used for assessment, evaluation, and instructional planning for both individual and group needs. A primary goal of the Student Performance Team is the effective use of test results in instruction. In pursuit of this goal, the Professional Learning coordinator regularly schedules workshops and meetings to help staff members examine and use test results in student instruction. Targeted student needs as outlined in the System Five-Year Strategic Plan include: Academic performance of all students will continue to improve. Reduce the achievement gap on the Georgia High School Graduation Test and the SAT between African-American students and white. Reduce the achievement gap between the students in Sumter County School System and students in Georgia. Reduce the achievement gap by 50% within five years. 100% compliance with No Child Left Behind for all schools. 100% of all third graders will read at grade level. Increase by 5% students meeting or exceeding the state passing score on all sections of the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (GCRCT.) Increase percentage of students taking Advanced Placement courses. Exceed state and national levels for grade 12 SAT scores. Increase SAT scores for black students by 100 points. Decrease the retention rate for black students. Increase by 10% college preparatory diplomas earned by black graduates. Increase black student participation in Advanced Placement courses. Improve academic skills of at-risk students. Improve academic achievement of SWD on state assessments. The need to revitalize and diversify the educational opportunities for students to be offered through the Career, Technical, and Agriculture Education Programs in the Sumter County Schools is a necessity. For this process to be worthwhile, the role of vested stakeholder is paramount in helping to focus on equipping students with the necessary skills needed to seek high-paying jobs in the technology driven future. From the recommendations garnish from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) evaluations, local program reviews, and advisory committees, the following proposed improvement strategies were ascertained: 1. Utilize data driven analysis in terms of baseline data, benchmarks, and quantitative goals in order to improve student academic learning. 2. Update any and all computer labs. 3. Explore a variety of instructional methods. 4. Incorporate into the instructional program additional career guidance activities, related work issues, and other preparatory tools for work. 5. Conduct a needs assessment to determine the necessity of offering new and expanded programs. 6. Continue to eliminate non-rigorous course offerings. A comprehensive process is on-going to ensure that the evaluation and promotion in performance is at the forefront of all programs. To verify that improvement in performance is occurring, the system will utilize the services of local, regional, and state evaluators to monitor process. Performance improvement strategies are being solicited from academic/technical performance teams, improvement/enhancement committees, and business/industry advisory groups. It is our goal to have all programs industry certified. For progress and additional information regarding some of these targeted needs, please see the table below. Overview I. Overall student needs are assessed in the late spring when CRCT, EOCT and GHSGT results come from the state. School level staff including principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches and key teachers analyzed school data for overall strengths and weaknesses. Academic data is disaggregated and examined to make both external and internal comparisons. 1. External Comparison: Data for all students is compared with data for all students at the state, RESA and comparison group levels. The examination is used to show how we rank against other systems. We look particularly at schools or systems that do better than us so that we can learn from

them. This type of comparison is also of great interest to our external stakeholders who want to know that we are being good stewards of our resources and students. 2. Internal Comparison: All data is compared internally to show differences or gaps between racial groups, special and regular education students and educationally disadvantaged and those not economically disadvantaged. Some data, for example high school science scores, are also examined by gender. This data is particularly useful in improving our program processes. It helps us select software, select or drop programs, develop schedules and map out professional learning for the system as a whole. This data is compiled into excel spreadsheets and shared informally with the school board at the June meeting. After that meeting, results are released to the local newspaper, the Americus Times Recorder. In addition, the central office and each school have a Data Room where data is shown in large graphs and charts. II. The Close Up: Individual Academic Student Data Each teacher spends between 6 – 8 hours of pre-planning involved in data analysis. Before pre-planning students are assigned to classrooms and each school's administrative staff, with help from instructional coaches and counselors, pull individual test data for each student. The system will look into purchasing Performance Matters/Testgate to assist in the presentation of data. At the classroom and grade level, data is examined for each student to determine specific strengths and weaknesses. Students who were just above or just below either the pass/fail or the meet/exceeds lines are targeted as bubble students. More in-depth information is kept on the bubble students using the Student Tracking Sheet. The data from CRCT and GHSGT are plotted individually on the Tracking Sheet with other information such as Lexile, DIBELS, DRA scores, EOCT and benchmarking data as well as information on attendance and discipline. III. Non-Academic Data (Required for Title IV) Input is gathered annually through survey and periodically, on a 3 – 5 year rotation, through community forums and focus groups. The last two rounds of focus groups and forums have been led, and the resulting data analyzed, by Family Connections and Visions. Every spring the system conducts comprehensive perception surveys. These include: Surveys of all teachers and staff Surveys of 10% of middle and high students Surveys of 10% of middle and high parents Surveys of community and business members selected by the Chamber of Commerce. The surveys contain question about the academic status of the school and system as well as stakeholder perception of the level of drug use, violence and safety of students both in school and on the bus. Additional information on drugs and safety is gathered from annual DOE Drug Free School survey. In addition we use the SAI survey to measure our growth in the area of professional learning. Parents in the Title I schools also have the opportunity in the spring and fall to have input on the Title I programs in their schools. School Safety Student academic assessment data, school attendance, disciplinary information on student and staff infractions, and safety issues will be analyzed each year to determine how to address student needs with regard to safety, drug awareness, violence awareness, bullying awareness, peer mediation, and conflict resolution. In addition to the preceding data, surveys for students, staff, and parents will be administered each spring to determine: Safety Concerns Frequency and type of safety-related incidents Frequency and type of drug- and tobacco-related incidents Evaluation of the system's overall strategies to determine how to address safety, drug, and violence issues The Sumter County School System completed the GSHS II (Georgia School Health Survey II needs assessment) to determine the needs of students related to safety, drug abuse and violence, all of which are barriers to learning impacting student achievement. Documented areas of need include drug abuse and tobacco use based on results of the spring GSHS II. Scientifically-based Research programs utilized in our system include Good Touch, Bad Touch, Choosing the Best, Botvin Life Skills, In My House and Too Good for Drugs.

The Sumter County School District Equity plan was developed to ensure that minority and low income students are not taught more frequently by non-highly qualified and inexperienced teachers. The district will ensure that minority and low income students' class sizes are comparable to other class sizes.

Sumter County School district has two primary schools, two elementary schools, two middle schools, one ninth grade academy and one 10-12 high school. Each fall, the Director of Federal Programs completes a comparability report for comparable schools. If the report reveals inequities in class size or staff, corrections are made before December 1 of each year.

In the spring and fall of each year the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, other central office administrators and principals review the HiQ report for teachers and

paraprofessionals. A plan is developed for all non-qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. During the spring hiring process, the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and principals will monitor the qualifications and certifications of all teacher and paraprofessional applicants to ensure that each applicant is highly qualified.

In reviewing the HiQ report an equity problem is evident in the middle and high schools in the area of math, science and reading. The district has developed math and science vertical teams to provide appropriate training for teachers. America's Choice Ramp Up for Literacy training has been implemented to support reading teachers. The district also reimburses teachers and paraprofessionals for PRAXIS/GACE assessment and coursework needed to become highly qualified. Professional learning opportunities are provided for all teachers, administrators and support staff.

### **1. EQUITY INDICATOR: Annual Needs Assessment including required equity components**

The professional learning program operates as a district and site based program. Professional learning activities are prioritized, written into the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan and updated yearly. A description of the planning process includes state equity, HiQ and FTE data and district-wide needs assessment, analysis of needs, setting goals, establishing objectives, planning activities to meet objectives, and identifying materials and resources linked to research. The areas of responsibilities are assigned as well as the establishment of evaluation procedures and budget information. Assessment data is collected both formatively and summatively.

The needs assessment, school's SACS Plans and or Improvement Plans, as well as the District Improvement Plan (CLIP), provide priorities for the school/district program of Professional Learning. The needs of all staff are identified and assessed through the district needs assessment administered in the spring of each year. Data is analyzed to help identify the district level and school level strengths and weaknesses. Each school, while recognizing individual needs, is also part of the whole picture so school level activities are shared at a district-wide meeting to assure compliance with state regulations, appropriateness of the activities and collaboration of consultants, etc. District staff strives to ensure that teaching and learning are based on Best Practices and linked to research.

Professional learning that is common to all schools are centered on a common topic is coordinated at the district level. Opportunities are provided for new teachers, support staff, clerical staff, maintenance workers, bus drivers, school food service workers, custodians, administrators, and particular groups of teachers and paraprofessionals. Training that centers around a common topic such as diverse needs of students or differentiation of instruction is also coordinated through the Student Performance Team.

AYP results revealed a need to strengthen professional learning opportunities for math teachers and teachers of special needs students. The district has planned early release days on the school calendar to support professional learning activities. The district has also hired a district math coach to support teachers and administrators in redelivering GPS standards and differentiated instruction.

The Needs Assessment specifically seeks input on school needs that address access to professional learning, HiQ teachers, experience and training, and retention of HiQ teachers. The results revealed the following prioritized needs: 1) GPS standards (curriculum alignment,

standards-based instruction, differentiation, academic coaches, keys to quality), 2) students with disabilities, 3) professional learning (curriculum, assessment, instruction, building capacity for leaders, 4) Induction program/mentoring, 5) recruit and retention of HiQ staff (test prep skills, reimbursement, retention/equity needs, incentives).

There was an equity need of teacher retention (experience) in Sumter County Middle School and Sumter County Elementary School.

The LEA conducts a needs assessment to determine the needs of the district. The needs assessment is conducted during the spring annually to include collaboration of school and district personnel, parents and key stakeholders. This is accomplished through the use of surveys (paper/pencil and electronic), assessments, observations, evaluations, teacher leaders, student performance teams and leadership discussions. The LEA hosts a meeting with the Superintendent, district office staff, and school leadership teams to discuss the results of surveys and leadership team discussions. Assessment data, discipline data, attendance data, class size data, HiQ data, equity data, SACS plans, CLIP, evaluation data and other pertinent information are also examined to determine the needs of the school system in relation to professional learning, class size, teacher experience, teacher retention, teacher recruitment and capability of teachers to meet the diverse needs of students.

**HiQ Status of Teachers Paraprofessionals**

- All teachers in the system are Highly Qualified

**HiQ Status of Paraprofessionals**

- All paraprofessionals are Highly Qualified

**Teacher Experience**

**K- 5 Teachers**

- Average Teaching Experience is 13.1
- 68.5% are in the mid-level experienced range (between 3 and 20 years)
- 21.2% are in the high-level experienced range (greater than 20 years)
- Annual Teacher Retention Rate is 78.6%

**6-8 Teachers**

- Average Teaching Experience is 10
- 63% are in the mid-level experienced range (between 3 and 20 years)
- 22.8% are in the low-level experienced range (less than 3 years)
- Annual Teacher Retention Rate is 64.8%

**9-12 Teachers**

- Average Teaching Experience is 10.3
- 66.2% are in the mid-level experienced range (between 3 and 20 years)
- 19.2% are in the low-level experienced range (less than 3 years)
- Annual Teacher Retention Rate is 69.4%

**Teacher Training to Meet Diverse Student Needs**

District and School Level Leadership Teams conducted numerous Focus Walks, informal teacher evaluations and formal teacher evaluations to assess the ability of its teachers to differentiate instruction and deliver GPS content based on the diverse needs of their students. Of all the indicators on the observation instrument differentiation was a major weakness. A school or district roster of professional learning summary will be maintained of teachers who participated in differentiation and GPS content delivery activities and workshops. All schools established and maintained professional learning community/faculty study group work throughout the school year.

### **Class Size**

All class sizes were in compliance with state regulations. Sumter County School District used Infinite Campus (student data management system) to calculate and track class size and to report FTE data. In addition, class size was reviewed prior to the start of school, two weeks after the start of school, and again two weeks after the start of second semester by the school leadership and district staff to ensure that classes comply with legislated regulations and state policy. Class sizes were also reviewed on that same timeline to ensure that classes within a school did not have a preponderance of poverty and/or minority students and are not larger than those of their higher SES and majority peers (classes that serve special populations are not included in this comparison). Regular class sizes, excluding self contained EIP, special needs, single course offerings at the high school did not vary more than 5 because of student requirements etc. Inequities were reviewed by the school and district leadership staff and rectified.

### **Retention**

The Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Student Services provided support to new employees through the Teacher Induction Program. Two of the top reasons employees left the district was to relocate or resignation due to budget reductions/reduction in force.

Novice teachers and teachers on a PDP were provided mentors. Each school selected a Teacher of the Month and one was selected as system Teacher of the Month. School and District employees participated in professional learning opportunities.

### **Recruitment**

CPI reports, HiQ data, personnel records, staff evaluations, school and district leadership team requests and stakeholder input was used to determine the recruitment needs for the district. The Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Student Services along other system staff attended recruitment fairs at various colleges and universities. TeachGeorgia and SCS websites were also used for recruiting perspective employees.

The Needs Assessment revealed the following prioritized needs for 2011-2012:  
Implementing GPS standards and Class Keys, Teacher Preparation and Ability to Meet Diverse Needs of Students, Accountability and Research, Motivating Students, Differentiating the Content, Process and Product of instruction, Teaching and Learning in Standards-Based Classrooms, Effective Assessments, Design and Implementation of Standards-Based Classrooms, Professional Learning Communities, Increase Communication, Feedback and Input from Parents and Stakeholders, Reduce Student Achievement Gap between African-American and White students, Reduce Student

Achievement Gap between Regular Education students and Students With Disabilities, migrant and ELLS, Social and Cultural Awareness and Acceptance, Transition from GPS and Common Core, Teacher Induction/Mentoring, Academic Coaching, Recruitment, Retention, and Teacher Equity.

**The district selected Teacher Preparation and Ability to Meet Diverse Needs of Students Indicator as an area for improvement.**

Academic Coaches, teacher leaders, district and school level administrators will work closely with consultants on “Putting Differentiation into Practice”. They will re-deliver training on the understanding and practical application of instructional strategies that will meet the needs of varied readiness levels of learners that challenge instruction in a classroom. They will experience the kinds of strategies that support learning on varied interest, readiness levels and learning styles. Staff will also attend conferences and workshops related to differentiated instruction. Administrators and academic coaches will attend Title I Coaches Professional Learning as well as other GaDOE and RESA, sponsored professional learning opportunities. Staff will attend state and national conferences focusing on meeting the diverse needs of students. Continued progress monitoring will be conducted by building administrators, school leadership teams, consultants, and the district Student Performance Team (district administrators). The coordinator of accountability and research and associate superintendent will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation and results. Planning will begin during the summer and run throughout the year.

Evaluation: Professional Learning sign-in sheets and agendas, Evaluation of Professional Learning Opportunities, Teacher observations/evaluations, Focus Walks checklists, benchmark assessment results, state assessment results

Based on the results of the 2010-2011 needs assessment, Sumter County Schools must address the issue of teacher preparation and ability to meet diverse needs of students.

