

Swainsboro High School Executive Summary

Description

Swainsboro High School (SHS) is one of two high schools in Emanuel County, Georgia. Swainsboro is the county seat and lies at the center of the Augusta-Macon-Savannah triangle in East Central Georgia. The slogan “Where Main Streets Meet” is often used to refer to Swainsboro because Georgia Highway 80 and U.S. Highway 1 cross at the town’s center.

Approximately 70% of the high school students enrolled in the Emanuel County School System attend Swainsboro High School. While we serve the students in the city of Swainsboro, our student body resides throughout the county. Emanuel County is 33% urban and 67% rural, whereas the city of Swainsboro is 90% urban and 10% rural.

Swainsboro High School is comprised of grades nine through twelve, and our student body consists of just over 700 students of which 52% are male and 48% are female. The race/ethnicity of our student population is 46.5% African American, 41.4% white, 6% Hispanic, 1% multiracial, and less than 1% Asian. SHS and all schools in our district are Title I schools. Approximately 87 percent of our students are eligible for free breakfast and lunch. Of our student body 14.4% have been identified as students with disabilities, and 2.2% of our students are English Language Learners.

Over the past decade, Swainsboro High School has experienced a gradual decrease in enrollment. More than 50% of the students we serve come from single-family homes. It is not uncommon in our community for relatives, other than the biological mother or father, to serve as our students' caregivers. Though a variety of opportunities are extended to families to become involved, parent involvement outside co- and extra-curricular activities remains low.

Emanuel County’s population is slightly under 25,000 and our school system is the largest employer in our community. Of Swainsboro High School’s 65 professionally certified staff, 31% have Bachelor degrees, 46% have Master degrees, 18.5% have Education Specialists degrees, and 4.5% have Doctorate degrees. Our staff has a broad range of experience with 20% in their first five years of teaching, 15% with 25 or more years of experience, and the remaining 65% fall in between. To attract and retain qualified staff, we partner with Georgia Southern University’s Master of Arts in Teaching program as well as Georgia TAPP which is facilitated by local RESAs.

Purpose

Emanuel County regards itself as “The Place to Grow,” and Swainsboro High School values our ability to “Grow our Students.” Our motto is to “Build a Foundation for Future Success,” and it is our mission to graduate all of our students with a meaningful diploma based on rigorous standards, which ensures college and career readiness. For the past four years, we have earned an average of more than 90% of the points GaDOE awards for student progress. We have been able to accomplish this through a sustained commitment to continuous improvement processes as outlined in our school improvement and professional learning plans which for the past six years has furthered our staff’s use of instruction and assessment practices enabling us to make student learning more engaging and personalized.

Alignment of district and school priorities, job-embedded professional learning and collaboration, increased student and staff technology resources, improved stakeholder relationships, and consistent rates of student progress serve as evidence of effective school organization and improvement efforts. These allow us to employ innovative technologies and teaching strategies, and higher education and industry partnerships which enable us to meet our students where they are, personalize their learning, and allow them to achieve the skills and knowledge which ensure a job or college entrance.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

For more than a decade Emanuel County Schools and specifically Swainsboro High School experienced shifts in leadership at the district and school levels which presented challenges when trying to plan for and allocate the resources necessary to address and prioritize needs. Shortly after the present school leadership was put into place, changes in leadership at the system level established procedures, which ensure the long-range planning and support for the human, material, and fiscal resources needed to advance school and system priorities.

For the past six years, Swainsboro High School's leadership has been consistent. This stability has provided for embedded instructional leadership and organizational management practices which have moved the school from a 54 CCRPI score in 2012 to a score of 78.4 last year which exceeded the state-average. Like many high schools in Georgia, SHS's CCRPI score declined this year given the redesign of score calculations. With the changing nature of performance measures and their weighting, SHS has found it best to focus our energies on factors within our control and concentrate our attention on teacher efficacy and personalized student learning.

Swainsboro High School has been recognized by Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) as a "Beating the Odds" school for two years in a row. Beating the Odds is a statistical analysis that compares a school's actual CCRPI performance with the performance of schools with similar characteristics across the state. Schools that perform higher than similar schools are considered "Beating the Odds."

To ensure optimal growth for all students we offer advanced placement courses in AP Language, AP US History and AP Chemistry. Additionally, ten percent of our students are dually enrolled at Swainsboro High School and East Georgia State College or Southeastern Technical College. We are also proud to have our Swainsboro High School's STAR Student and Teacher recognized as our county's representatives.

An indicator of our career readiness pursuits is the high number of business education students earning Microsoft Office Certification in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. This year, Swainsboro High School holds 2nd place honors in the Georgia Microsoft Office Specialist championship for Microsoft Word 2016 certifications. Last year, we had a student advance to the national championship where he earned 2nd place.

Another indicator of our students' career readiness is our Work-Based Learning students' achievements. They are working in high skilled, high wage, high demand positions and are receiving hands-on training in welding, manufacturing, robotics, and a variety of other career fields. For the past three years, they

have earned an annual average of \$200,000. Emanuel County Schools WBL program has a working relationship with the Swainsboro-Emanuel County Chamber of Commerce and Joint Development Authority, and local industries. Their Vision 2020 collaborative has helped to create internships in business and industry with the goal of developing a "home-grown" workforce for our community. Through this effort, several WBL students have been hired full-time after graduation.

In the co-curricular realm, Swainsboro High School was recognized by National BETA as a school of Merit in 2016 and 2017 and achieved School of Excellence status in 2018. Year after year our BETA members earn honors at the State BETA convention and compete at the National BETA convention each summer.

The Swainsboro High School FBLA Chapter has received National Gold Seal and Outstanding Chapter awards each year for the past 20 years, and for over 20 consecutive years we have had one or more competitors qualify and attend the National Leadership Conference. We were awarded 2018 Georgia FBLA Chapter of the Year at the 2018 State Leadership Conference. One of our members is serving as Georgia FBLA Region Four President and another two members are serving as officers. The many region, state, and national achievements of our students are made possible by our dedicated club sponsors. One of whom serves on the National FBLA Board of Directors and another of whom received Georgia FBLA's New Adviser of the Year award in 2018.

Georgia CTI supports students with disabilities enrolled in Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education classes and they too have a student organization. In 2017 one of our students served as State Reporter for Georgia CTI. Swainsboro High School's CTI coordinator serves as Region 2 Director-Elect and for the past several years has been recognized as a 100% Coordinator at the State Leadership Conference.

Swainsboro High School FFA is also competitive. Several students have achieved 2nd and 3rd place recognition at regional events and submitted proficiency applications in Agriculture Mechanics Design and Fabrication and Swine Production. Two FFA students received State FFA Degrees at the state convention last April.

The Swainsboro High School TSA chapter placed in Pin Design and Structural Engineering at Tech Day 2018 and our chapter was recently recognized as a conference presenter for teaching Technology Problem Solving at TSA Fall Leadercon 2018. Also, students participating in both FCCLA and JROTC have achieved honors at leadership rallies and company camps respectively.

Swainsboro High School strives to take advantage of youth leadership development opportunities available to our students. This past year, students in our 21st Century Leaders chapter were selected to attend the Summer Youth Leadership Institute (SYLI) at Emory University and EarthCare: The Leadership Challenge for the 21st Century at Georgia College & State University. While each year locally, approximately 30 students in grades 10, 11, and 12 participate in the East Georgia State College Sudie Fulford Center's Youth Leadership Academy.

On the athletic front, the Swainsboro High School Tiger football team was named Region 2AA Champion and advanced to the second round of state playoffs. This year our Head Football Coach was named Region 2AA Coach of the Year as were our head boys and girls basketball coaches in recent years. Both SHS boys and girls basketball teams have a tradition of making it deep into the playoffs with the boys being runner-up to state in 2017. Last year both teams made state playoffs. The boys' team advanced to 1st round and the girls' team was defeated by the reigning state champion in round two. Additionally,

six boys qualified for the state track meet and our recently added girls Soccer team advanced to state play. In co-ed sports, the SHS Competition Cheer team earned a spot to compete at state in Columbus.

Three Swainsboro High School students were recognized as local Wendy's Heisman award winners and another was recognized by WJBF as a CSRA Scholar-Athlete. Each year many of our athletes earn athletic scholarships.

In the area of fine arts, overwhelming community support made it possible for 11 selected members of the Swainsboro High School Band to travel and perform at the world famous Carnegie Hall last January. The SHS Band of Gold has a long and distinguished reputation for their half-time shows and parade participation. The concert band has earned a reputation of excellence as well with a 16 year streak of superior ratings at the district level. Each year many students are selected to participate in both District Honor Band and All-State Honor Band. Several of our graduates earned fine arts scholarships last year and are now pursuing music degrees and performing at universities throughout the state.

A Swainsboro High School student serves as vice-president on the Georgia 4-H State Board of Directors and two students serve as president and board member of the Southeast District 4-H Senior Board of Directors. One of whom is a Master 4-H'er in Instrumental Performing Arts. In addition to having the 4-H Public Speaking Grand Champion, we also have students and teams of students attain 4-H achievements at the region and state levels.

Swainsboro High School's three school administrators are members of the National Association of Secondary Principals and Georgia Association of Educational Leaders. The school principal recently completed a four-year tenure as a board member and district officer on the Georgia Association of Secondary Principals. SHS's Principal has presented on the topic of organizational effectiveness to drive school improvement at both the GaDOE Georgia Educational Institute for Leadership and GASSP Fall Conference. Her doctoral dissertation focused on teacher effectiveness. One of the school's two assistant principals is completing his doctorate degree and his dissertation focuses on college and career academies in rural communities. Both the principal and the school instructional coach serve as presenters for Georgia Southern University's teacher education Clinical CAMP.

Swainsboro High School has committed itself to continuously rising to the occasion in pursuit of academic success and college and career readiness for our students and community. While this is important, we also remember the importance of activities which strengthen character. A highlight of last school term was the balloon release our SHS students, staff, and alumni organized to honor fallen hero and former Swainsboro High School student, Staff Sgt. Dustin Wright, a Green Beret killed in Niger. Events such as the balloon release and the student-organized weekly linking of arms and singing the Swainsboro High School alma mater at the end of ballgames have served to inspire our hope for future generations.

Additional Information

Swainsboro High School understands that the foundation to student success is support for our teachers, our greatest resource. We strive to do this through a teacher and leader mechanism which shows clear connections between our efforts related to instructional leadership (Leader Keys), teaching and learning (Teacher Keys), and teacher leaders effectiveness (School Improvement and Professional Learning).

Swainsboro High School leaders understand the importance of taking an active role in helping teachers do what they do best; help students learn. Therefore, we understand the importance of using data in the ongoing development of curriculum, assessment, and instruction. Our shared and distributed leadership is comprised of three components, which are:

- SHS Administrative Team - includes of our Principal, Assistant Principals, Instructional Coach, Counselors, Media Specialist, RTI teacher, and Special Education Lead teacher. Our administrative team facilitates the development, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision for teaching and learning and clarifies expectations.
- SHS Organizational Management Team (OMT) which includes the administrative team and department chairs support, manage, and oversee the school's organization, operation, and use of resources to ensure a safe, secure, and positive learning environment.
- Swainsboro High School Improvement Leadership Team (SILT) which is made up of department representatives, administrators, instructional coach, RTI teacher, and a central office representative. SILT gathers and analyzes data to monitor, review, and adjust school improvement actions and as needed, adjust our plan for professional learning.

Through a collective inquiry cycle, our school instructional leadership teams identified targeted areas for growth for 2018-2019 and developed SMART goals to address a balance of assessments, data-driven culture, personalized learning, and literacy development.

- One strategy for growth is sustained job-embedded professional learning and collaboration with colleagues to address curriculum, assessment, instruction, and technology to plan instruction and assessment practices, and monitor and improve instruction. Swainsboro High School has committed 10% of our professional learning time to support this strategy.
- Another strategy for growth is a pervasive data-driven culture which ensures personalized learning. SHS teachers are spending 25% of their professional planning time (collaborative planning meetings) engaged in job-embedded collaboration with colleagues to address curriculum and utilize assessment data to monitor student progress and improve instruction.
- A third strategy is job-embedded professional learning to develop and support activities needed to implement classroom instruction that targets literacy development. It is our goal for teachers to spend 50% of their professional learning time focused on literacy development by the end of the 2018-2019 school term.

Professional learning communities, peer observations, instructional coaching, response to intervention, and teacher and student technology use are important components which support these goals. Over a four year period we have been able to move to one-to-one technology and are updating interactive instructional technologies to ensure sustainability.

Swainsboro High School committed to work toward a one-on-one device initiative five years ago, to increase and enhance the use of technology as a tool to improve student engagement, promote rigor, and transform instructional practices. This year, we met our goal of ensuring Chromebook devices are available to students in every core classroom. Additionally, as our elective classes move toward this goal, classroom Chromebook carts, two computer labs, and the Media Center provide students in all classrooms access to information and expand teachers' opportunities to differentiate and personalize instruction.

Developing our performance culture is essential to our improvement. Swainsboro High School has benefited from Emanuel County School's attention to improving our organization's performance. For the past five years, our district has committed to participating in Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement. What began as GLISI cohorts of school administrators and instructional leaders has evolved into teacher leadership teams attending base camp and summit activities to formulate a concise theory of action using systems-thinking to develop solutions.

Whether referring to the students or adults in our building, when all things within our control are taken into account, building a foundation for future success truly capitulates the ideals guiding Swainsboro High School.