



Executive Summary

Emanuel County School System

Mrs. Erma Wakefield Jenkins, Superintendent
P. O. Box 130
201 North Main Street
Swainsboro, GA 30401

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Introduction

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

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

Description of the School System

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

Emanuel County, the 87th county created in the state, was created from Bulloch and Montgomery Counties in December 10, 1812. The idea for forming Emanuel County came from Stephen Swain, who had been elected in 1812 to represent Montgomery County in the Georgia Senate. The new county was named for one of Georgia's most obscure and least known governors, David Emanuel, who served as the president of the Georgia Senate. The county which is rural covers an area of 686 square miles, incorporating the cities of Adrian, Garfield, Nunez, Oak Park, Stillmore, Summertown, Swainsboro and Twin City. Swainsboro is the County Seat. Emanuel County supports a total population of 22,598 with an average household income of \$42,982. Unemployment rate is 6.6%. The county's population is comprised of four major ethnic groups: White (61.6%), Afro-American (33.5%), Asian (2%), and Hispanic (4.1%). Millage Rate is currently 22.91. Persons living below poverty level accounts for 16.7% of the population and child poverty rate (persons under 18 living in poverty) are 26%.

The major employers in the county are the school system, Crider Poultry, Walmart, the local hospital, and East Georgia State College. Our school system is the largest employer with 612 employees. The poultry processing plant located in Stillmore employs a work force of 450 and our local Walmart is the next largest employer with 285. The hospital and East Georgia College employs 275 and 270 workers respectively. Other major manufacturing employers include Advanced Metal Components (160), Handi House Manufacturing (105), Kongsberg Automotive (formerly CAPRO, Inc.) (115), Husqvarna Outdoor (140), Interfor Wood Products (95), Nordson Corporation (180), Stitch-N-Print (165), R & F Manufacturing (135) and Ogeechee Steel (70). Several other small manufacturing businesses and fast food franchises also provide employment opportunities for residents in our county.

Emanuel County Schools is operating under a \$29,804,192.00 budget with a \$6,532,564 fund balance as of July 1, 2013 and a projected June 30, 2014 fund balance of \$5,903,454. Emanuel County Schools works hard to provide a quality education with the resources available.

Emanuel County has been fortunate that the economic recession did not impact the county as compared to some of the other counties in the state. Emanuel County did not encounter a housing spike for new construction when the housing boom hit. Therefore when the housing bubble burst, our county was not as significantly affected. Home values in our area during this time remained constant. Emanuel County's tax digest has increased by 1% since 2009, or \$54,618.

The recession statewide resulted in state austerity cuts on the Quality Basic Education (QBE) system allotments. Emanuel County's allotment over the past five years resulted in an average of 11.8% cut, or \$2,565,094. In 2009, the cut was only 1%, or \$259,379. For 2013, the cut was 16%, or \$3,303,984. The state Equalization Grant helped to ease the impact for a rural district such as Emanuel County. In 2009 the Emanuel School District received \$2,878,924 in Equalization Funds from the state on the system's allotment sheet. The effects of the county's tax digest has resulted in an increase of Equalization over the past few years. In 2013 the district received \$3,079,017 in Equalization Funds. The increase of Equalization Funding was a benefit to the district due to the increased austerity cuts. However, the \$200,093 increase has not made up for the \$3,044,605 austerity cut since 2009.

Overall, the Emanuel County School District has experienced a 6% decrease in revenues since 2009, or \$2,140,069.77. Due to the economic downturn, the school district increased the millage rate from 11 to 14 mills in 2010. In 2013, the board was able to reduce the rate to 13.848 mills due to a slight increase in home values in the area. Federal funding sources has decreased since 2009 by 23%, or \$1,055,214.06.

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To compensate for the declining revenues, expenditures were reduced by 10%, or \$3,554,275.06, during the same period. Local and state funded expenditures were reduced 4%, or \$1,011,744.60. Federally funded expenditures were reduced by 36%, or \$2,542,530.56.

In 2009, the school district's funded student enrollment (FTE) was 4249. The system is currently being funded for 4101 on the 2014 system allotment sheet. However, there is a mid-term adjustment expected to increase the funding enrollment to 4124. Since 2009, a decrease of 4%, or 148 FTE, is another impact on the revenue and expenses for Emanuel County Schools.

With our vision of "Strengthening our Community: One Student at a Time," the school system is governed by a seven-member Board of Education elected for four-year terms. Their primary function is to formulate policies that directly impact the educational programs. With a dedicated commitment to quality instruction for all students, the board is committed to promoting and improving student learning in a high quality, safe environment. The day to day operation of the school system is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools who is appointed by the board. The Superintendent's primary responsibility is to implement board policies and successfully administer programs to fulfill state and federal requirements, as well as, the expectations of the local stakeholders within our communities.

In March of 2009, the board appointed a new superintendent who resigned June 2010. The current Superintendent assumed the role in July of 2010, and immediately began to implement positive changes toward improving student learning, fiscal responsibility, and community involvement.

Emanuel County Schools consists of 4 elementary schools, 1 middle school, 1 middle/high combination school, 1 grades 9-12 high school and an alternative education program (6th-12th). Emanuel County Schools has 285 teachers, 82 paraprofessionals. Although Emanuel County Schools has made a focused effort in obtaining a 100% highly qualified teaching staff, data from the GaPSC Equity Technical Assistance toll documents a 99.82% HiQ instructional staff. Six of our seven schools have 100% HiQ teachers. Currently, Swainsboro High School has one teacher assigned to an English/Language Arts position for which she is not highly qualified. ECS has a 100% highly qualified paraprofessional staff. The average year of teaching experience for the system is 15.9 years. Swainsboro High School has the lowest average years of experience with 13.3 years, followed by Swainsboro Elementary with 13.8 years, and Emanuel County Institute with 15.2. Our four schools exceeding the system average are Adrian School of Performing Arts and Swainsboro Middle with 16.5 and Swainsboro Primary with 18.3 years and Twin City Elementary with the most seasoned staff of 19.3 years of average teaching experience. Over the past few years, Emanuel County Schools has had a number of teachers retire which have been replaced by beginning or less experienced teachers resulting in a decline in teacher experience.

Over the past three years, Emanuel County schools received a waiver from the Georgia Department of Education for increasing the maximum class size due to the declining revenue. Through the FY13 Title I comparability calculation all ECS had comparable class sizes. From the final 2012-2013 Title I Comparability report, the lowest student/instructional staff ratio was 13.6 and the highest 15.8 for an average of 14.7 ratio. Additionally, Title I funds 24 core content area classroom teachers to further reduce class size.

The student population of the school system is reflective of Emanuel County with an enrollment of 47.3% white students, 43.33% black students, 6.3% Hispanic and 3% other races and ethnicities.

System's Purpose

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

The current Emanuel County School District Vision, Mission, and Beliefs were developed through a collaborative process including district and school level staff, as well as, parents and community stakeholders. Beginning winter of 2012 and continuing over the course of several months, various groups revisited all components of our previous strategic plan, compared those of other similar school districts, as well as, the new strategic plan of the Georgia Department of Education while reviewing research on high performing school districts. From that work, stakeholders agreed upon a mission, vision and beliefs that encapsulated our shared commitment to student success.

The results have been a clear, consistent district vision that promotes a strong focus on learning: a mission that charges staff to action aligned with the vision and a set of beliefs regarding stakeholder responsibilities.

OUR VISION

Strengthening our Community: One Student at a Time!

OUR MISSION STATEMENTS

To graduate all Emanuel County public school students with a meaningful diploma based on rigorous standards which ensures college and career readiness delivered by effective highly qualified educators.

CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

Because students are our most valuable resources, we believe the following to be essential:

- Education is the foundation for a better life.
- Learning is a life-long process.
- Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity.
- Everyone is unique, worthy, and capable of learning and achieving success.
- Everyone is entitled to relevant and productive learning experiences.
- Everyone is responsible for his/her behavior as an individual and as a member of society.
- A strong educational program is necessary for a thriving and progressive community.
- Meeting educational needs requires the active participation and support of home, school, and community.

Emanuel County Schools utilizes our Strategic Plan to communicate goals, action steps, and initiatives, as well as document and monitor our progress through performance indicators. The Strategic Plan enables us to translate our strategies into a measurement system that clearly communicates the targets we need to reach to achieve success. It focuses on our district priorities to allow staff to align initiatives, strategies, finances, and resources to accomplish our goals. Each Strategic Plan goal consists of goals, action steps, timelines, funding sources, persons responsible, and possible evidence. This plan serves as the foundation for all other plans within our school district.

The Strategic Plan is reviewed and revised by the following groups: District Leadership Team (Principals for all elementary, middle and high schools) Superintendent and Executive Council, Instructional Coordinators/Assessment Council (School level curriculum administrative members), Technology Department, Finance Department, Human Resources Department, CTAE Department, School Nutrition Department, Maintenance and Facilities Department, along with Focus Groups including, SACS Standards Chairs, Board of Education Members,

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Educational Improvement Council (Teacher Leader Representatives), Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, Parents and Community Members.

Students are challenged through the instruction provided through all specialized programs as well as activities in their general education classes. Achievement gaps are closed through research-based best practices in various academic remedial programs. Opportunities are provided to explore and apply higher-order thinking skills through research-based instructional strategies such as:

- Learning-Focused Model
- Co-teaching
- Hands-on learning experiences
- Assessment Rubrics
- Differentiated Instruction
- Effective Teaching Strategies
- Technology integration
- Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics and Computing (CEISMC)
- Project SENSE (Science Education Network for the South East)
- Project BESST (Be Engaged in Social Studies Teaching)
- Vertical Alignment of Curriculum

Students are provided opportunities to facilitate achievement through the following programs such as:

- Response to Intervention Pyramid (RTI)
- School-based intervention programs
- Afterschool programs and/or tutoring
- Summer school programs
- Credit Recovery
- High School Math support classes
- School-year extension
- Parent Resource Center
- CTAE Pathway Credentialing
- Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) and
- Dual Enrollment through East Georgia State College and Southeastern Technical College.

Through its involvement in a continuous improvement process, which includes the SACS CASI accreditation process, staff members demonstrate this commitment daily. The Emanuel County Schools System is committed to raising achievement and closing gaps for all students and has demonstrated the ability to implement a system-focused approach to instruction in a standards-based environment by leading collaborative efforts to prioritize curriculum, develop aligned assessments, and plan instruction to improve student achievement. We believe that all students can learn and we convey high expectations for all students. The system is committed to prioritizing best practices that correlate with other components to ensure success. One of our next steps will be to create new and innovative ways to address and identify safety nets for students through the RTI process. The system is committed to making the necessary improvements each year that are essential to making the teaching and learning environments successful for all.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

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

Emanuel County Schools prides itself in sustaining high student achievement results. The mission has always been to ensure the highest quality education for each student and to have every child graduate from high school college or career ready. In 2012 the federal government created a four year graduation cohort to establish a consistent way to measure graduation rates across the country. Historically, the district has worked to increase the graduation rate, even as the calculation formula became more rigorous for the 2011-2012 school year, the district still posted a higher graduation rate than the state with a 8.93 gain over last year. Notable achievement would be with Emanuel County Institute which moved their graduation rate from 70.79 in 2012 to 87.5 which is an impressive 16.71 gain. We continue to strive for a 100% graduation rate. Much of our success can be attributed to the advisement and personalized plans offered to every middle and high school student in the system.

As a system we have worked hard to increase our performance on the state criteria referenced test in all areas. During the 2012-2013 school year, the Georgia Department of Education implemented new curriculum standards, the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, in the content areas of English/Language Arts and mathematics. The new, more rigorous standards provide more challenging learning experiences for all students. With the challenge of implementing the new standards, some content areas have experienced a decline in student achievement at both the system and state level. The content areas of science and social studies continue to follow the Georgia Performance Standards. Of the 30 CRCT tests administered (5 content areas in each grade 3-8), Emanuel County Schools students showed an increase in 17 tests over the previous year and showed an increase of 20 over the 2011-12 school year.

Recently Adrian School of Performing Arts and Emanuel County Institute were recognized by the Georgia Department of Education as High Progress Reward Schools because of gains. This designation is given to Title I schools that are in the top 10% for progress in the "all students category" for growth over the past three years.

To assist students in transitioning from high school to college, Emanuel County Schools offer Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit programs. These advance placement options provide opportunities for our students to take college-level courses and earn concurrent credit toward a high school diploma and a college degree while still in high school. Presently both high schools have students participating in these programs. We are very fortunate to have East Georgia State College and Southeastern Technical College located in our community. Presently 24 Swainsboro High School (SHS) students are jointly enrolled at East Georgia State College while 13 students are jointly enrolled from Emanuel County Institute (ECI). Seventeen of the SHS students are participating in the ACCEL program and seven are participating in Move-On-When Ready. There are 20 SHS and ECI students dually enrolled at Southeastern Technical College in Certified Nursing and Criminal Justice programs

Additional Information

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

School Safety

Every parent who entrusts a child to us depends on us to keep him or her safe at school, the recent tragedy at the elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut has refocused our attention on providing a safe haven in an unpredictable world. A comprehensive approach is necessary to safeguard our schools. Realizing that no one solution is the fail-proof answer for all situations, we continue the ongoing process of reviewing and upgrading school security and procedures.

In addition to the district crisis plan, each school has an individual plan tailored to its specific needs; these emergency plans and procedures include a perpetual "protective lockdown" in which classroom and perimeter exterior doors are locked or monitored at all times, and lockdown as well as fire/evacuation and natural disaster drills are practiced regularly

Our most valuable resource for ensuring student safety is school staff, through prevention, swift and appropriate response, and mitigation. This year the board, at the recommendation of our superintendent entered into an agreement with our local Sheriff Dept. to put two School Resource Officers in our schools, paying special attention to middle and high schools.

School Safety is a frequent topic on Principals and Director Meeting agendas. Our Safety Committee meets bimonthly to review concerns and vulnerabilities. During the 2012-2013 school year our superintendent hosted a Safety Forum to include our local law enforcement, Fire Department, Emergency Management Unit, the Medical Community (Hospital and Health Dept.) and the Mayors of all communities within our school attendance zone to meet with GEMA Georgia Emergency Management Agency to discuss our community preparedness for handling a disaster, with special emphasis on our schools.

The Sheriff's Office and county Emergency Management Office have provided personnel to present to staff on topics such as gang prevention and crisis response. The Emergency Management Office has entered the school and mobile phone numbers of administrators into their Emergency Notification System (ENS), an automated phone calling system to alert parents during severe weather/other emergency events has just been purchased to expand means of communication.

With the recent passed ESPLOST, older entrances to all school have been redesigned for security (Second locked entrances with buzzer systems and secure administrative suites), bus drivers and classroom teachers have access to communication in case of emergency, nurses are in all schools, administrators and SROs have cell phone access and links to reach buses or other personnel at one time.

School safety is one of those areas where we can never do enough, especially with limited resources, but vigilance is a must, and we will continue to consider our circumstances and the most practical measures to address potential vulnerabilities, while maintaining a welcoming and family-friendly environment.