Executive Summary

Alcovy High School
Newton County School System

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Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school 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, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

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

Describe the school'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 serves?

Opening in the fall of 2006, Alcovy High School (AHS), "Home of the Tigers", is the largest of three high schools that serve Newton County. The high school is located 10 miles south of Covington, Georgia, in a community comprised of primarily farmland, landmarks, and landscapes recognizable across the United States from popular television series and movies such as The Dukes of Hazzard, In the Heat of the Night and Halloween II, in which AHS served as the filming location. AHS' state of the art campus is constructed on 100 acres that includes a school building facility, which can accommodate 2,500 students, classrooms equipped with modern technologies, a gymnasium which holds 2300 spectators, and a 700 seat auditorium. The campus also includes a cross country course, football and soccer practice fields, baseball field, softball field, eight lane track, and four tennis courts. Located in a close knitted community where high values are placed on education, parents, teachers, and community stakeholders consistently collaborate to ensure that AHS' students are academically equipped, enabled, and prepared for life-long learning and career success.

At the start of the 2009-2010 school year, Alcovy transitioned to a block schedule. The block schedule followed a 4x4 model in which each block consisted of 90 minutes of instructional time. In the fall of 2010, Alcovy opened its 9th Grade Academy. The Academy contains 48 classrooms on two levels with its own gymnasium. In 2011, Newton County high schools transitioned back to a traditional seven (7) period day schedule with the implementation of a tutorial initiative known as Instructional Focus (IF). The design of IF is outlined to occur at a specified time of day where students receive additional academic support without having required graduation credits penalized. Each year, based on analyzed data, the IF time period, academic focus, support and interventions are adjusted to address identified areas of students' academic needs.

For the 2013-2014 school year, Alcovy High School has 1,839 students enrolled. The ethnicity demographic profile of AHS is approximately 42% Caucasian, 49% African-American, 5% Hispanic and 4% other ethnic groups. Concurrently, AHS' enrollment profile includes an ELL population of 1% and a Special Education (SWD) population of 14%.

AHS has experienced a steady increase in participation in federally funded programs over the last four years. For the 2013-2014 school year, 64% of the student body receive free or reduced lunches. Additionally, AHS developed a Targeted Assistance Title I Program during the 2009-2010 school year, and then transitioned to a School-Wide Title I Program the following year. Further, Alcovy has experienced significant changes within the administrative staff. The structure of the administrative team is composed of a principal and four assistant principals. From January 2009, there had been two interim principals and seven different assistant principals assigned to the administrative team. As of August, 2013, a new principal and assistant principal of instruction were appointed to AHS' administrative team. Among the four assistant principals, there is only one administrator who has served on the administrative team since Alcovy opened in 2006. Concurrently, each year from 2006, AHS has consistently experienced a high turn-over of certified teachers. Yearly, approximately, 25 % of the teaching staff has changed which includes approximately 75% of first- year hires.

Like other high schools in Georgia, AHS has been presented with the challenges of new curriculum each year. The past three years have brought the transition from Georgia Performance Standards to Common Core Standards with an emphasis on literacy. The changes in the state math curriculum have been tremendous. For instance, many students have been impacted from the change from Integrated Math to a more traditional layout with CCGPS. Demands for increased rigor have led to a rise of enrollment in the school's Advanced Placement (AP) program. AHS has been awarded in several areas for AP participation.

Even with numerous challenges and changes, AHS remains one of the best public high schools in the state of Georgia. The school is located in a community that values education. Parents and teachers work together to ensure AHS is equipping, enabling, and preparing students.
School’s Purpose

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

ALCOVY HIGH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of AHS is to promote personal and academic excellence in our students by working with them, their parents, and the community to prepare the students to be successful in school and in their careers, to enable students to become life-long learners, and to equip them to have fulfilling lives. The vision of AHS is “Facilitating a rigorous, relevant, and technology-rich education to prepare active and competent global citizens.”

INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

Newton County School’s non-negotiable goals are: Increased Student Achievement; More Effective Teaching; Technology Integration; and Use of Highly Effective Professional Learning Communities.

In pursuit of academic excellence, AHS’ non-negotiable goal is to prepare all students to be college and/or career ready within a supportive, engaging, student-centered learning environment that ensures continuous improvement through the use of research-based instructional strategies. Our objectives include increasing the graduation rate; increasing the percentage of student meeting the performance targets; increasing the percentage of students exceeding the performance targets; increasing the percentage of students meeting the standards on the writing assessments; increasing the percentage of students exceeding the standards on the writing assessment; and increasing the percentage of students identified as college-ready via the ACT and/or SAT.

To ensure that our objectives are mastered, AHS’ students are allotted opportunities to participate in a diverse number of rigorous academically based programs. Our school system has implemented several key initiatives, including utilizing Marzano’s Classroom Instruction that Works and Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement to create effective lesson plans; developing curriculum maps to ensure consistency throughout the district; and developing common course syllabi. In addition, the school system has developed benchmark assessments to strategically monitor student performance throughout the year. Along with benchmark assessments, norm-referenced assessments are implemented to improve the quality of learning environment and curricular weaknesses. In the pursuit of instructional excellence, our non-negotiable goal is to build the capacity of personnel to deliver high quality instruction. Highly qualified teachers are charged with delivering high quality instruction through the implementation of research-based strategies; the integration of technology in classroom lessons; utilization of the Learning-Focused School Planning Framework to develop lesson plans; development of system curriculum maps and common course syllabi; collaboration among departments; preparation for instructional monitoring through administrative walkthroughs and teacher evaluations; and on-going participation in professional learning. Additionally, Dr. Dan Mulligan is contracted through our system to provide new teachers (during the induction process) with the instructional expectations via Classroom Instruction that Works and Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement. Dr. Mulligan also has been contracted to provide professional learning opportunities for content specialists, content leaders, and teacher leaders addressing effective research-based instructional strategies and the development of rigorous lessons. AHS has also hired an Academic Coach to work with the new teachers and teachers who have been identified as requiring additional classroom instructional support to plan and implement more cohesive instruction. Students enrolled at Alcovy High School participate in rigorous coursework and a variety of academic programs to ensure continuous progression of student achievement. AHS ensures that all tenth grade students participate in the PSAT, in which the district utilizes the results from the test to identify areas of curricular weaknesses. In addition, students participate in Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment courses, which are designed to increase the percentage of students scoring a 3 or higher on Advanced Placement exams. Students also have an opportunity to participate in the “Pathway” program.

Additionally, AHS sponsors an after-school program equipped with highly qualified teachers. The program is designed to provide multiple learning opportunities for identified students “at risk” as well as for students who need additional learning time outside of the required daily
classroom instruction. Students in the afterschool program are allotted opportunities to participate in content reviews prior to the administration of high-stake assessments. AHS also utilizes the services of a graduation coach to monitor student progress and assist with recommendations for interventions. The graduation coach works with and monitors the progress of students who participate in the "credit recovery" programs, which allow students the opportunity to make up lost credits required for graduation. Further, plans are in place to implement a comprehensive Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program in AHS for students who have a history of behavior and discipline challenges.
Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

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

As a result of AHS' quality instructional practices, we have received an array of notable achievements and recognition for areas of academic improvement. The following is a brief summation of achievements and recognitions in the last three years.

2013 STEM Schools
2012-2013 AP Access and Support School
2011-2012 AP Access and Support School
2012-2013 Champions of the Helen Ruffin Regional Reading Bowl
2012-2013 Georgia High Progress Reward School for Improved Academic Performance
2012-2013 AP Stem Schools
Gates Millennium Scholars
Robert C. Byrd Scholar
National Merit Semi-Finalist
AP Scholars
AP Scholars with Honor
AP Scholar with Distinction
Additional Information

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

Added to our district's non-negotiable goals for instructional excellence is the integration of technology into classroom instruction. Objectives for technology include provided opportunities for student use of technology throughout the school day; student access to and availability of technology resources; integration of technology included in lesson plans; and on-going technology focused professional learning opportunities facilitated by members of AHS' Technology Committee made available to all faculty/staff.

Newton County School's last non-negotiable goal is to ensure relevant, highly effective Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), utilized to support continuous staff improvement and to create a culture of high expectations for students and staff. To reach this goal, the district has implemented the "Plan, Do, Check, Act" Cycle to ensure that PLCs are functional at the highest level through effective planning, implementation, and monitoring of communities. AHS Professional Learning Committees meet weekly to analyze current data and plan lessons for continuous student achievement.

A pivotal factor in AHS's overall academic achievement is our collaboration with parental and community stakeholders. Parental and community involvement is an on-going goal for AHS. Parental involvement is implemented through continuous collaborations between teachers and parents. Parents are encouraged to participate in regularly scheduled parent conferences and workshops throughout the school year. AHS promotes communication through the school marque, School Messenger Calls/Emails and through social network avenues such as Twitter and Facebook. Parents also have 24-hour access to the grading system, Infinite Campus, enabling them to monitor their child's academic progress from home. Concurrently, local businesses and community stakeholders are encouraged and welcomed to participate in a variety of academically oriented activities and programs throughout the school year.

Alcovy High School "Tigers" take pride in providing a wealth of opportunities for students to enhance their academic, physical, social, and emotional potential through school-wide assemblies, clubs, competitions, outreach initiatives, programs, and sporting events.