Executive Summary

Heard-Mixon Elementary 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?

Heard-Mixon Elementary School (HMES) has deep roots in Newton County by serving students in our county since the late 1800’s. HMES is located off Highway 36 in the rural, southern section of Newton County about ten miles outside of the city of Covington. The population of Covington consists of 13,347, and the median household income for 2007-2011 was $35,491 (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Throughout the area served by HMES, 21.1% households have two parent homes while 13.1% are single family homes (United States Census, 2010). HMES serves a diverse student population with approximately 24% Black, 68% White, and 12% other racial-ethnic group in which 72% are economically disadvantaged. The mobility or transient rate is high, with slightly less than one-third of the student body moving regularly. As of December 16, 2013, 16.03% of the students have already changed schools with the majority being in Pre-K (16.67%), Kindergarten (21.25%), and First Grade (19.32%).

The enrollment for HMES has dropped since the rezoning in 2010-2011 school year. School years 09-10 total enrollments were 579, 2010-2011 consisted of 577 students, and fiscal school year 2012 ended with 526, a drop that resulted from the rezoning. Last year, 2012-2013, the total enrollment was 534 and as of December 18, 2013, the school currently has 488 students enrolled.

The percentage of students with disabilities (SWD) has increased dramatically in the past three years. In the 2010-2011 school year, HMES had 14% SWD in its population. This percentage almost doubled with 21% in the 2011-2012 school year, and maintained at 21% for the 2012-2013 school year.

Our dedicated staff, who often refers to our school as family, works hard to serve the students at Heard-Mixon Elementary. The staff includes two administrators, twenty-four general education teachers, seven special education teachers, eleven paraprofessionals, four of which work with our special needs students, a media specialist, and four of five days we have an art teacher, physical education teacher, and a music teacher. Additional personnel include: two secretaries, a half day school nurse, three and a half custodians, an instructional tech paraprofessional, and five cafeteria workers. There is one Pre-K and one Special Needs Pre-K class; three second grade classes and grades kindergarten, one, four and five each have four classes. The teacher experience of the staff ranges from first year to thirty years. All of our professional staff are "highly qualified," with sixteen having a master's degree and six with an education specialist degree. In addition, three certified staff members have leadership certificates. Because of our strong sense of community, administrative/staff support, overall job satisfaction, and family-type atmosphere, there has been little turnover for many years.

Heard-Mixon was recognized as a Title I Distinguished School in 2005, 2006 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 for achieving AYP for eight consecutive years. The GDOE recognized Heard-Mixon in February 2011 as a Bronze status school for the percent of students in exceeds and the greatest gains from the previous year on the GRCRT. In December 2011, HMES was named GA School of Excellence for continuous gains in student achievement for the past three years as measured by assessments in reading and mathematics. In 2012, Heard-Mixon was recognized as a Title I Reward School.
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.

Vision Statement
At Heard-Mixon Elementary School, we envision every child soaring to achieve success through a rigorous and relevant education, which will prepare them to think critically in order to produce, perform, create and communicate their knowledge to a hyper-connected global audience.

Belief Statements
These beliefs guide us in educating our Heard-Mixon SUPERSTARS:

- Students will reach their greatest potential when education is a partnership shared between home, school, and community.
- Ultimately, education develops a student's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual skills.
- Parental involvement makes a big positive difference in a child's achievement.
- Every child deserves the opportunity to learn in a safe, nurturing, and structured environment.
- Respect and appreciation for individual differences must be fostered.
- Students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process.
- Technology should be an integral part of the learning environment to prepare students for an ever-changing world.
- All students can experience success when a variety of teaching strategies are used.
- Reading, writing, and mathematics are essential to academic excellence.
- Superstars are lifelong learners.

The purpose of Heard-Mixon Elementary School is to prepare students to be college and career ready within a supportive, engaging, student-centered learning environment that ensures continuous improvement through the use of research based instructional strategies.

Our purpose is achieved through following Newton County Schools' Non-Negotiable Goals of Increased Student Achievement and More effective Teaching. The strategies used to reach goals are Research Based Instructional Strategies, Building Background Knowledge, Technology Integration and Use of Highly effective Professional Learning Communities.

Heard-Mixon fosters a culture consistent with the system's strategic plan. At HMES, actions and decisions are deliberately and consistently aligned toward the improvement and achievement of the school's mission. The mission statement was revised in the fall of 2012. The committee surveyed all stakeholders about the mission statement, analyzed the data and made necessary adjustments. HMES's vision is for each student to excel academically, socially and emotionally while demonstrating care and concern for others in order to be successful in lifelong learning.

The staff is committed to educating the total child. Decisions are made based on what is in the best interest of students. A partnership between school, home and community is utilized to meet the individual needs of all students at HMES. Positive Discipline is used as an overarching behavior management system based on Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective Students. Our school-wide discipline plan incorporates these habits by recognizing students who demonstrate proactive behaviors. The strategies used help to create a school climate where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. As a direct result of this focus, HMES continues to have a warm, friendly and inviting atmosphere which provides a safe and positive learning environment for all students.
Based on survey results from all stakeholders, the greatest strengths at HMES are that teachers and staff hold all students to high academic standards and are accountable for student learning. Instructional time is valued and protected. HMES offers enrichment programs for all learners which include QUEST, ELL, Title I and intervention classes which are used for remediation and acceleration. Students are held to high standards in all areas. To achieve these high standards, data from STAR, Thinkgate, CRCT, CogAT, AR, ALEKS and classroom assessments are used to differentiate instruction and monitor progress. Professional Learning Communities meet regularly to address county and school level concerns and the impact it has on student achievement. All teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities which meet weekly to discuss student work, analyze data, monitor student progress and brainstorm strategies to help students become academically successful. Through the instructional program at HMES, major emphasis is placed developing CRA mathematical skills. HMES teachers spend thirty minutes daily to provide remediate, accelerate and enrich students to help meet their individual growth potential. Grade level planning meetings are held weekly to design lessons, share resources, and to discuss student progress toward grade level expectations. Each year the faculty and staff collect and analyze test data to determine if the previous year's goals were met and to adjust and establish new School Improvement Goals as part of the school improvement process. Appropriate instructional strategies are selected to meet the data driven goals. Professional learning opportunities are provided as a result of observed needs based on the analysis of data in relation to Heard-Mixon's school improvement plan. The expectation is that all staff will be proficient in the use of research based instructional strategies. Resources are purchased making the best use of available funds. Classrooms have access to the Internet, and teachers integrate technology into the curriculum. HMES has multiple sources of technology (computer labs, iPads, iPods, netbooks, laptops, computes…) to aid in technology integration. HMES also has up to five computers and an activboard in each classroom.

Parents are encouraged to actively supportive and be involved in the school. The PTO board meets monthly and diligently helps raise funds to support programs that touch all HMES students. Our PTO recently created a Very Involved Parents (VIP) program to encourage more parental involvement Parents volunteer five hours a quarter to help with school needs. HMES offers extracurricular activities such as Book Club, Chorus, 4-H, Jr. BETA, and Yearbook Club. These clubs are sponsored by teachers and parents. HMES School Council meets at least four times a year as a bridge between school and community. This seven member School Council team also serves as an advisory board for school improvement.

One of the challenges, however, has been meeting the needs of a rapidly growing SWD student body. Despite leading the county in the number of students with disabilities, test scores are remaining stable. One of the strongest qualities at HMES is the ability of faculty and staff to embrace every child who walks through the doors. Each child is instructed in a manner that meets their needs while maintaining high expectations. HMES embraces the fact that all students are unique. In doing so, students are accepted with love, open arms and are nurtured to achieve their maximum potential and provided with strategies for life-long learning. HMES prides itself on being a warm, inviting place to learn and grow for students, parents and staff. HMES is committed to providing appropriate instruction that enables all students to “Be the Best.”
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.

Heard-Mixon Elementary School has received numerous distinguished awards for notable achievements. Each honor indicates HMES’s commitment to excellence. Distinguished awards are:

- Title 1 Reward School
- Title 1 School of Excellence
- Title 1 Distinguished School – 8 Consecutive Years
- Bronze Award Winner
- DAR Essay Winners
- Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl County Winners
- Poetry Recitation Runner Up
- Young Georgia Author Winner
- State Honor Chorus Participants
- Presidential Awards for Physical Fitness (Numerous)
- NCSS Teachers of the Year
- NCSS Top 3 Teachers of the Year
- National Board Teacher

The goal of the HMES’s SIP’s has focused on improving student achievement as evidenced by data from local and state assessments. All students are engaged in rigorous and relevant tasks that are differentiated to allow all learners to meet and exceed the standards. HMES concentrated on moving more students from Meets to Exceeds on the CRCT in all academic areas.

HMES achieved this goal, and it is evident on the CRCT results. In Reading, scores in Exceeding went from 24% in 2010 to 43% in 2013, and in ELA, the scores went from 25% in Exceeding to 44%. The percentage of students exceeding in Math went from 28% in 2010 to 48% in 2013.

Early in the school year the school leadership team participates in a data walk where assessment data is disaggregated. The team looks for strengths, weaknesses and trends at the school by grade and subgroup levels in the areas of Reading, ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. Students are compared at the school, the district and the state levels. The SLT shares this data with grade level teachers; teachers further analyze the data to develop the SIP.

Data from the 2013 school year noted strengths in Reading vocabulary and literary comprehension with the weakness being reading for information. Data analysis, geometry and algebra were areas of strength in Math with measurement being a slight weakness. Students exceeding in ELA have grown significantly in the last six years. Research and writing is slightly stronger than grammar and sentence construction. Physical Science was the area of strength while Life science was the noted area of weakness. In social Studies, government was slightly higher than economics.

HMES will continue to put time and effort into setting high expectations for students and utilizing research-based instructional practices to support learning. To ensure that the focus is on data driven goals and learning strategies, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), as well as
as the administrative team will continue to monitor the implementation of the curriculum and instructional strategies. STAR results will be analyzed after each administration and instruction adjusted to meet student needs. To involve students in their learning, individual goals will be set with student input and monitored throughout the year in order to help students meet growth targets by spring 2014.

Reflection allows targeted coaching and support for the faculty in the consistent and pervasive implementation of the curriculum. This is especially important for the 66% of the student body below the poverty level, the 21% of the students in special needs programs and the 20% of students in the Response to Intervention process. In striving to provide the scaffolding necessary for all students to succeed, HMES is exploring options for scheduling multiple opportunities for support. Reaching individual student potential will continue to be the expectation at Heard-Mixon Elementary.
Additional Information

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

At Heard-Mixon Elementary School, we take great pride in our wonderful school as we look for opportunities on a daily basis to challenge, inspire, and lead our students to become successful citizens in the ever-changing global society. We pride ourselves on being a school where our students are excited about learning, our teachers are passionate about teaching, and our school community is proud of our accomplishments.

We are also very proud to have a “family” atmosphere where trust and acceptance promote positive relationships between all stakeholders.