Executive Summary

Newton County Theme School at Ficquett
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?

The Newton County Theme School at Ficquett ("NCTS") is centrally located in Newton County in the city of Covington. The school is nestled between a residential area and a main highway in Covington with numerous businesses. NCTS is positioned immediately behind the Newton County Board of Education, within walking distance of the downtown square, as well as the hospital. NCTS serves students in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade. It was established in 2009 as a theme school (called Fairview Theme School) for students in Kindergarten through third grade. As grades were added, the school needed additional room for classes. Consequently, NCTS moved to its current location (the former Ficquett Elementary Building) for the 2011-2012 academic school year.

The student body is a diverse population composed of 52.4% White, 39.7% Black or African American, 3.4% Multiracial, 2.2% Hispanic/Latino, and 1.6% other. Students at NCTS live in all parts of the county, as students must apply and be accepted in order to attend the school. The current enrollment at NCTS is 909 students, which is an increase of 7.3% over the previous year's enrollment. The school has experienced a steady increase in enrollment due to the addition of grades. However, the enrollment is expected to stabilize since no additional grades will be added. The percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch is 29.67. The only language spoken at NCTS is English.

The administration, faculty, and staff are also diverse in both background and experiences. There are 88 employees at NCTS. 61 of these employees are certified, and 27 of these employees are classified. 18% of the certified staff members hold a T-4 certificate, 36% hold a T-5 certificate, 13% hold a T-6 certificate, and 3% hold a T-7 certificate. 100% of the certified staff are highly qualified. The ratio of classroom teachers to students is 23:1; the ratio of all teachers to students is 15:1.

The theme of NCTS is Parental Involvement. Parents commit to volunteer for at least 20 hours each academic year. Students must apply for admission to NCTS, meeting both academic and behavior requirements to be considered for admission. Once students are accepted to NCTS, parents must sign a contract regarding requirements to maintain eligibility to remain at the school. Some of these requirements include the dress code, attendance, volunteer hours, as well as academic and behavioral expectations.

The CCRPI score for 2013 for the elementary School was 95.8 and the score for the middle school was 89. Both of these scores were the highest in the county in their respective school categories. The school's rate of improvement from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 was 33%.
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.

The mission of NCTS is to provide educational excellence for all students by creating a collaborative environment that empowers students, parents, staff, and community members to ignite a lifetime desire and love of learning through project-based learning, rigorous curriculum, and family involvement. The vision of NCTS is to become a world-class school where students engage in rigorous and well-rounded curriculum in a safe and motivating environment that prepares them for future learning and life beyond school.

In order to increase student achievement, NCTS uses a variety of resources and strategies. Teachers utilize research based strategies, such as the ones in Marzano's Classroom Instruction that Works and Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement. Teachers use these high impact strategies to plan and implement lessons that ensure academic success, as well as provide acceleration and remediation for students.

Technology integration is critical to providing students with the foundational skills they will need for future education and also in the workforce. Teachers integrate technology on a frequent basis in many different ways. Most of our classrooms are equipped with an interactive whiteboard. These allow teachers to provide authentic experiences for the students to engage them in the learning process. One of the newest initiatives is "Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT)". Students are allowed to bring their own devices to class. These devices are used for assessment, remediation and instruction. NCTS also has laptop carts, IPad carts and Active votes that can additionally be used in the classroom for supplementing these areas.

The teachers at NCTS are also increasing their capacity to deliver high quality instruction. Teachers attend professional learning sessions both in and out of the school setting. These sessions ensure that teachers are delivering instruction using the most current, research based strategies. Professional Learning Communities are utilized to increase the level of teaching and learning. Teachers plan both horizontally (with other teachers of the same grade level) as well as vertically (with teachers from other grade levels) to align both content and delivery. Also, 23% of our teachers are Gifted certified and use gifted teaching strategies to help improve their students' achievement as well as share these strategies with their colleagues to help improve classroom instruction.
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.

For the 2012-2013 academic school year, we had 100% of our students in grades 3 - 7 take the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test ("CRCT"). The most notable achievement was the number of students who exceeded the standard in each area of the CRCT. On the Reading portion of the CRCT, in third grade, 80% of our students exceeded the standard; in fourth grade, 69% of our students exceeded the standard; in fifth grade, 60% of our students exceeded the standard; in sixth grade, 65% of our students exceeded the standard; and in seventh grade, 56% of our students exceeded the standard.

On the English/Language Arts portion of the CRCT, in third grade, 71% of our students exceeded the standard; in fourth grade, 71% of our students exceeded the standard; in fifth grade, 27% of our students exceeded the standard; in sixth grade, 60% of our students exceeded the standard; and in seventh grade, 68% of our students exceeded the standard.

On the Math portion of the CRCT, in third grade, 65% of our students exceeded the standard; in fourth grade, 75% of our students exceeded the standard; in fifth grade, 65% of our students exceeded the standard; in sixth grade, 41% of our students exceeded the standard; and in seventh grade, 54% of our students exceeded the standard.

On the Science portion of the CRCT, in third grade, 54% of our students exceeded the standard; in fourth grade, 56% of our students exceeded the standard; in fifth grade, 62% of our students exceeded the standard; in sixth grade, 37% of our students exceeded the standard; and in seventh grade, 81% of our students exceeded the standard.

On the Social Studies portion of the CRCT, in third grade, 65% of our students exceeded the standard; in fourth grade, 53% of our students exceeded the standard; in fifth grade, 27% of our students exceeded the standard; in sixth grade, 78% of our students exceeded the standard; and in seventh grade, 63% of our students exceeded the standard.

We were also very proud to be recognized as a "2012-2013 Georgia High Progress Reward School for Improved Academic Performance over a 3-Year Period". We also have our students continually place either first or second in county, regional and state competitions such as; literacy, drama, Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, and Science Fair.

We look to improve on our student achievement as we work to continue to raise our exceeds scores in all areas of the CRCT as well as strive to get 100% of our students in grades 3 through 8 to pass the CRCT in all subject areas. We also work to continue to meet the needs of our 21st Century learners by providing multiple opportunities to integrate technology in the learning process as well as look to incorporate components of the STEM program into our classrooms.
Additional Information

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

The Newton County Theme School will continue to focus on and support the mission and vision of the school and school system by providing a safe and engaging learning environment that includes but is not limited to: Building Background Knowledge, Research-Based Instructional Strategies, Technology Integration, and Project-Based Learning.