Executive Summary

Porterdale 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?

Porterdale School (K-12) originally was established in the Porterdale old Community House located in the city of Porterdale. Porterdale was a "Model Textile Town" known to the residence as a mill village with the height of production ranging from 1940 - 1970. Porterdale Elementary was established at its current location in 1971, as a part of the Newton County School System. Porterdale is approximately 40 miles east of Atlanta.

Some of the main challenges for Porterdale over the past few years have included a rise in rental property within the school zone, budgetary cuts, a shift in student population, and a high mobility rate of 36%. Due to economic hardships within the county and foreclosures, Porterdale's zone has seen an increase in rental property which has resulted in less stability for our student population as families move in and out of the zone with few families becoming an established part of the community. As a result of the economic downturn, budgetary cuts which have affected Porterdale Elementary have been necessary. In the past three years we have downsized two teachers and two paraprofessional positions. This has required Porterdale to restructure to utilize some of the Title I and Early Intervention Program (EIP) funded teachers as regular classroom teachers rather than as supplemental teachers. Porterdale's staff currently consists of 35 certified personnel, 9 classified and 2 administrators. All teachers, certified support personnel, paraprofessionals, and administrators are highly qualified.

Porterdale Elementary School (PES) is a Pre-K through fifth grade school with an enrollment of 438 students. At Porterdale the curriculum is built around the broad range of students it serves. Eighty one percent of the students are eligible to participate in the federal free or reduced lunch programs. Slightly more than 40% receive services through one or more supplemental programs including special education and EIP. Eleven percent of Porterdale's students are served through the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. The student population has shifted from a predominately Caucasian majority in the past ten years to a predominately African American majority. The current Caucasian population is 16% with 65% being the current African American population. A variety of other ethnic/racial minorities comprise 19% of the student population.

Porterdale Elementary is an organization that involves highly concerned stakeholders in collaboratively educating our students. These stakeholders include parents, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), school council, business partners, community volunteers, mentors, youth interns, and other partners in education. Porterdale's staff believes that "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child."
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 vision of Porterdale Elementary School is that all students become college and career ready individuals, critical thinkers, and productive citizens who continue to learn for life.

The mission of Porterdale Elementary School is to provide a quality, rigorous, and relevant education for all students so that all may have the opportunity to develop and succeed in a competitive and changing global society. A recent revision has taken place with input from faculty, staff, parents, and School Council. The fulfillment of the mission statement is accomplished through implementation of the following two-fold strategy.

To build the capacity of personnel to deliver high quality instruction through:
1) Using research based instructional strategies in classrooms (RBIS)
2) Building the background knowledge of students during the school day (BBK)
3) Integrating the use of technology in classroom lessons (TI)

To ensure high-functioning Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) with a definite time and place to meet and an agenda of work centered on instruction and its outcomes for students through ongoing question-asking and asking steps:
Step 1: Pre-analyze data aligned to Common Core Georgia performance Standards (CCGPS)/ Georgia Assessments
Step 2: Deliver standards-based instruction using RBIS, BBK, and TI
Step 3: Conduct common assessment (formative and/or benchmarks) aligned to CCGPS
Step 4: Analyze common assessment results to check for mastery
Step 5: Implement CCGPS based-tiered remediation (RTI) and enrichment
Step 6: Check for mastery and repeat cycle

Porterdale Elementary Faculty and Staff believe:
- that teachers, parents, students and the community share the responsibility for the support of the school's mission.
- that students accept responsibility for being active learners and good citizens when provided a safe, learning focused environment.
- that students learn best when they are provided with an education that is appropriate to their individual learning styles.
- that all students are able to reach their intellectual, social, physical, and emotional potential.

The administration, teachers, and support staff at Porterdale Elementary set high expectations for students and themselves. This is reflected in the high levels of regular classroom instruction and interventions administered through the RTI program. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and researched based methods to instruct on a daily basis.
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.

Porterdale Elementary notable achievement accomplishments:

For the past three years, Porterdale Elementary school has established exceptional partnership with various stakeholders in the community that work with our students and staff.

2013-
-Third grade showing gains in every subject area including a 61% increase in social studies.

-Porterdale has increased the number of 3rd - 5th grade students meeting or exceeding on the CRCT in Science and Social Studies.

2012-
-Porterdale Elementary was awarded a $1,000 New Teacher Assistant Grant from Georgia Power. Porterdale Elementary School was one of 14 schools in Georgia to be awarded a grant from the latest round of Lowe's Toolbox for Education grant program

2011-
-Title One State High-Progress Reward School
-School met Adequate Yearly Progress

Porterdale Elementary areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years:

In the next three years, Porterdale is seeking to increase score in all content areas 3rd -5th grade through the implementation of Marzano high yield strategies, professional learning, data analysis, and other research based practices. Porterdale will close the achievement gap between the males and females through interest based literature and gender based instructional practices. Boys to Men and Pearls of Essence mentoring programs will continue to be instrumental in helping to close the achievement gap between males and females. Finally, Porterdale will implement a science STEM lab as it works toward becoming a STEM certified school.

While Porterdale Elementary continues to provide a high quality education to all of its students in Newton County, there are current and upcoming challenges to be faced. In the past three years, Porterdale's student population has decreased by 10% each year. The student high mobility rate also impacts the decrease in population with 27% of mobile students transferred to another school within the district, 46% transferred to another Georgia public school, 16% transferred out of state, 3% transferred to a private school, and 5% unknown. Becoming a STEM certified school will increase student population and retention.
Additional Information

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

For continuous improvement and to address areas of weakness, Porterdale Elementary participates in a school-wide intervention called RAM Ready. During Ram Ready, students are grouped according to their academic needs in the area of mathematics. Students participate in remedial and/or accelerated instruction during RAM ready time. All staff including regular education teachers, supplemental teachers, special area teachers (i.e. art, music, and P.E.), and paraprofessionals provide small group instruction.

The grouping is consistently revised based on current data taken from formative assessments. The students work in small groups. Two to three groups are teacher guided. Students performed low in math for CCRPI 2013. Therefore, during Porterdale's annual summer retreat, the administration and the leadership team chose to focus on using RAM Ready as a strategy to improve math skills.

Before the official school day begins, teachers provide tutorials for students that scored within a 15 point range below or above the CRCT standards (math and reading), and benchmarks for STAR math, and STAR reading.

In addition, the school implemented Assessment and LEarning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS) which is a Web-based, artificially intelligent assessment, and learning system. ALEKS uses adaptive questioning to quickly and accurately determine exactly what a student knows and doesn't know in a course. ALEKS then instructs the student on the topics she/he is most ready to learn. As a student works through a course, ALEKS periodically reassesses the student to ensure that topics learned are also retained. ALEKS courses are very complete in their topic coverage and ALEKS avoids multiple-choice questions. A student who shows a high level of mastery of an ALEKS course will be successful in the actual course he/she is taking. ALEKS also provides the advantages of one-on-one instruction. ALEKS is used as an intervention tool for students performing low in mathematics. ALEKS is used with both regular and special education students.