Community Engagement Initiative

Bulloch County Schools

Facilitated by
Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education
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BULLOCH COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE
OF THE BULLOCH COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

In February 2013, the Bulloch County School System engaged the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (Partnership) in a process to engage the Bulloch County community in meaningful dialog regarding the education of their children and youth. The school system viewed the community engagement process as preliminary steps leading up to a strategic planning process. With significant input from the Bulloch County Board of Education, the Partnership and the school system designed the Community Engagement Initiative, a process that included:

- Identification of community needs and aspirations for the school system
- Pertinent data and other information for the strategic planning process
- Extensive community input to be used in the strategic planning process
- Community awareness of educational issues
- A strong community base that supports school improvement efforts

The Partnership provided the overall guidance for and assistance with the Community Engagement Initiative. The specific activities are listed.

1. Appoint an Advisory Committee (small core group) of business and industry leaders, postsecondary educators, community leaders, prekindergarten – twelfth grade educators.
   The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to guide the Community Engagement Initiative, analyze the data, and make recommendations for the strategic planning process.

2. Collect data through:
   - Extensive Research. A large volume of school, school system, and community data were collected. In addition, the Advisory Committee identified additional data it needed to perform its tasks. The Partnership, school system, and the Advisory Committee analyzed the data and used the analyses to plan and conduct the other activities of the Project.
   - Focus Group Meetings. The Partnership conducted ten focus group meetings, each concentrating on a certain segment of the community, for example, parents, business and industry leaders, postsecondary institution leaders, teachers. Each focus group began with similar questions, such as “What are the greatest strengths of the Bulloch County School System?” and “What are the greatest challenges of the Bulloch County School?” Additionally, questions were created for each category of participants. For example, one question asked to business and industry leaders was, “Are there opportunities for partnerships that would benefit you and the Bulloch County School System?” To the postsecondary institution participants, one question that was asked was, “What specific skills do students need when they get to postsecondary institutions?”
   - Community Leader Interviews. The Partnership conducted 13 interviews with community leaders selected by the school system. Interviews began with general questions, similar to the ones used in the focus groups, and created additional questions based on the specific position the individual held in the community.
   - Community Perception Survey. A survey was created for the members of the community, again asking general questions as the focus groups and individual interviews had. Additionally, more community oriented questions were asked, such as, “What is the relative importance of various initiatives, such as creating magnet schools, aligning career pathways with local and regional business and industry needs, and creating a highly effective and diverse teaching staff?”
   - Education Summit. The school system conducted a meeting of various segments of the community to update the community on school improvement efforts. Additionally, a presentation was made on the link between the educational level of the community workforce and the economic vitality of the community. The participants were asked to attend breakout sessions so that the school system could hear from community members their thoughts and aspirations for the school system and to receive input on
key educational issues. Each breakout session reported to the entire group a summary of its discussion.

3. Analyze all data from the research, focus group meetings, interviews, surveys, and Education Summit and present it to the Advisory Committee.

4. Recommend, based on analyses of all data collected in the activities above, broad areas of focus around which the strategic plan may be crafted. For example, those areas may include career pathways, graduation rate, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses offered and taken.

5. Submit a report to the Bulloch County schools for use in the strategic planning process.

On May 31, 2013 this report, documenting the Bulloch County Community Engagement Initiative and the resulting recommendations, was presented to the Bulloch County School System.
BULLOCH COUNTY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

One of the first tasks of the Bulloch County School System was to appoint an Advisory Committee to guide the Community Engagement Initiative. Thirty-three individuals were appointed based on their positions in the community and their expertise. (See Appendix A for a list of Advisory Committee members.)

At the first meeting of the Advisory Committee, the Superintendent gave the charge to the committee to accomplish the following goal and tasks.

Goal

Engage a broad coalition of the Bulloch County community in meaningful dialog regarding the education of the children and youth of the community that will result in
- Pertinent information for the strategic planning process
- Identification of community needs and aspirations for the school system
- Extensive community input to be used in the strategic planning process
- Community awareness of education issues
- A strong community base that supports school improvement efforts.

Tasks

The tasks assigned to the Advisory Committee were:
- Analyze Data Determine Additional Data Needed
- Plan Education Summit
- Participate in Education Summit
- Analyze Additional Data
- Identify and Prioritize Education Issues, Strengths, and Challenges for the Strategic Planning Process
- Report to the Superintendent and Board of Education

The Superintendent presented the current initiatives of the school system and the upcoming strategic planning process. A great deal of school, school system, and community data were presented and the committee members discussed the data and issues facing the school system.

The second meeting of the Advisory Committee included a discussion of the new Common Core curriculum adopted by the State and the College and Career Readiness Performance Index, which will be the new accountability system for Georgia schools and school systems. An in-depth discussion of data on the issues was conducted. The committee members participated in a process to prioritize the issues for use in
- The strategic planning process
- Designing focus group, interview, and survey questions
- The Education Summit

Early in the process, the Community Engagement Advisory Committee identified the most important issues for the school system to consider in the community engagement process. The Advisory Committee participated in a process to prioritize the issues. See Table I for the list of issues identified and prioritized by the Advisory Committee.
Table I: Issues as Identified and Prioritized for the Strategic Planning Process by the Advisory Committee

April 2, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Total Number of Dots Weighted</td>
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<tr>
<td>College &amp; Career Readiness</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highly Effective &amp; Diverse Teaching Workforce</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) &amp; Rigor</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships &amp; Community Engagement</td>
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<td>Too Much Testing</td>
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<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the prioritized issues are:
1. College and Career Readiness
2. Highly Effective and Diverse Teaching Workforce
3. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Rigor
4. Partnership and Community Engagement
5. Funding
6. Students Needs
7. School Safety and Discipline
8. Barriers to Graduation
9. Too Much Testing

After a great deal of discussion about the findings based on data from the interviews, survey, focus group meetings, and the Education Summit, in the third meeting of the Advisory Committee the strengths and challenges were narrowed and prioritized. This is discussed in the section, Prioritized Issues, Strengths, and Challenges of the Bulloch County School System (page 55) of this report.

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1 Advisory Committee members were given five dots of one color and one dot of another color. They were instructed to place the five dots on the “important” issues and the different color dot on the “most important” issue. Column 2 indicates the placement of the five dots. Column 3 indicates the number of “most important” dots. Column 4 is the total of columns 2 and 3. Column 5 indicates the total number of dots with the number of the “most important” dots multiplied by 2.
BULLOCH COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM AND BULLOCH COUNTY COMMUNITY DATA

As one of its first steps, the Community Engagement Advisory Committee analyzed student achievement and other data about the school system and the Bulloch County community at large. Data were gathered from multiple sources. Listed are the data that were examined:

- Third, Fifth & Eighth Grades Student Achievement Data, 2010-2011
- End-of-Course Tests Scores, 2010-2011
- Georgia High School Graduation Tests Scores, 2010-2011
- Graduation Rates & System Performance Score, 2010-2011, Unless Otherwise Noted
- SAT Scores, High School Seniors Most Recent, 2010-2011
- ACT Scores, 2010-2011
- Fall and Spring Enrollment for Bulloch County School System, Three School Years
- Enrollment in Compensatory Programs, Bulloch County School System
- Enrollment Selected Programs, Bulloch County School System
- Dropout Rates – Grades 9 – 12, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- Dropout Rates – Grades 7 – 12, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- Student Absenteeism, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- Third Grade CRCT Scores, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- Fifth Grade CRCT Scores, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- Eighth Grade CRCT Scores, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- Eighth Grade Writing Assessment Scores, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- End-of-Course Tests Scores, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- Georgia High School Writing Test Scores, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- Georgia High School Graduation Tests Scores, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- Advanced Placement Exams, Bulloch County School System
- Exit Certification for High School Completers, Bulloch County School System
- HOPE Scholarship Eligibility, Bulloch County School System and Georgia
- ACT Scores, Bulloch County School System
- Most Recent SAT Scores, Bulloch County School System, Disaggregated
- Highest SAT Scores, Bulloch County School System
- Certified Personnel Data, Bulloch County School System
- Fiscal Data, Bulloch County School System
- Bulloch County Schools National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Data
- Bulloch County EdWeek School System Graduation Report
- Community Data, Bulloch County School System
- Quick Facts, Bulloch County, Georgia

(See Appendix B for the Bulloch County Data Packet.)

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Data included in the packet was the most recent available at the time.
COMMUNITY LEADER INTERVIEWS

Between May 2, 2013 and May 30, 2013, 14 individuals were interviewed to gather their unique perspectives of the Bulloch County School System and the future they would like to see in the years to come. The superintendent and others determined which individuals they wanted to hear from. Although some of the individuals were a part of one focus group or another, some individuals served on the Advisory Committee, and a few participated in both, the interview questions were different and individual perceptions will be valuable in the process. (See Appendix C for a list of the community leaders interviewed.) The amount of time for the interviews was a total of 4.38 hours, with the range 8 minutes to 35 minutes. The average time was 18.79 minutes.

Questions for Bulloch County Community Engagement Interviews

The questions used in the interviews are listed.
1. What are the greatest strengths of the Bulloch County schools?
2. What are the greatest challenges?
3. What are the most important issues to address in the strategic planning process?
4. How can the Bulloch County schools positively influence the community?
5. Is there anything else you would like to say?

The Questions and Responses from Community Engagement Interviews

[NOTE: A topic is repeated if more than one individual mentioned it.]

1. What are the greatest strengths of the Bulloch County schools?
   - Facilities
   - Better at partnering now – still can improve
   - Building bridges again with community and higher education
   - Research protocols with university
   - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Grant
   - Grant proposals
   - Good facilities – sometimes to the excess – sound for the next generation
   - ESPOlst very successful
   - Confidence in new leadership
   - Board took good risk hiring a non-traditional superintendent – good business mind, navigates education change well, understands education
   - Georgia Southern University, Ogeechee Technical College, East Georgia College
   - Large businesses and industries
   - Rich in community resources
   - Educators have good attitudes now
   - Better funded than most school systems due to good resource management
   - Technology
   - Fiscal status
   - Well-managed finances
   - Lot of technology training for teachers
   - One hundred percent of teachers are highly qualified
   - Great potential for meaningful collaboration
   - Superintendent’s vision
   - More than ninety percent of teachers are strong instructionally
   - Eighty to ninety percent of parents are supportive
   - Leadership
   - Financial position
• Potential for industry growth
• Close proximity to postsecondary schools
• Unique location with Ogeechee Tech, Georgia Southern University, and East Georgia College
• Administrator expertise
• Facilities – sometimes to excess
• Infrastructure solid – last for a generation
• Successful ESPLOST
• Confidence in new leadership
• Previous superintendent ineffective, arrogant, and difficult to work with
• Superintendent good business background and understands education
• Availability of technology
• Recognized in the top eight school systems for its size in the use of technology
• Communication with stakeholders
• Proximity to postsecondary school
• Financial management
• Facilities
• Leadership on board and in central office
• Facilities
• Technology
• Dedicated teachers – must get rid of some
• Quality staff
• Recognized as highly effective teachers and paraprofessionals at all schools
• Areas of improvement needed
• Must keep fine arts despite budget issues
• Need a balance between academics, athletics, and fine arts
• Educators work well together
• Efficient
• Good principals and other administrators
• Facilities
• ESPLOST
• Relationship with postsecondary institution not great – must leverage
• Well-educated faculty
• Teachers want students to succeed
• Impressed with the leadership’s commitment to reach out to the community
• Strategic planning
• Dealing with diverse populations
• Not enough diversity in the faculty
• Georgia Southern University and East Georgia State College
• Good tax base
• Good place to live
• Committed Board and Teachers

2. What are the greatest challenges?
• The economy
• Managing resources
• Making the decisions that are best for students
• Leveraging higher education and community resources
• Somewhat scattered with no strategic plan
• Use strategic planning process to find our focus
• Student Learning Objectives
• Pilot Teacher Keys next year
• Principals do not know how to manage data
• Common core implementation
• No assistant principals at some schools
• Need strategic direction, prioritization, and timelines
• Some principals and assistant principals lack skills to work with parents
• Implementation of the Teachers Keys Evaluation System (TKES) and Leadership Keys Evaluation System (LKES) and College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI)
• Some administrators are not qualified to be administrators
• Some principals really push the performance of teachers
• Jump from one hot topic to another
• Rezoning
• Becoming wireless
• Use of formative and summative assessments
• Parent and community disengaged and uninformed
• Sometimes too politically correct
• Some parents and community members have had negative experiences in the school under previous leadership
• We talk differentiation theory but do not implement it in classrooms
• Many children are left behind, especially disadvantaged and students with disabilities
• Gifted students are not challenged
• Some students and parents are frustrated with the schools
• Keep small town feeling
• Ownership of the schools by stakeholders
• Disconnection between education and the public
• First in customer service
• Community apathy
• Systemic poverty

3. What are the most important issues to address in the strategic planning process?
• Everyone should feel a part of the process – if not, it is his or her fault
• Workforce development
• Institutional effectiveness
• More students graduating with skills they need
• Service learning projects
• College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) implementation
• Prioritize goals and timelines for implementation
• Cannot do everything at one time
• Career academies
• Improve the workforce skills of adults
• Share resources with postsecondary education and eliminate duplication of efforts
• More academic opportunities to improve graduation rate
• Parent and community engagement
• Rigor at all levels for all students
• Differentiation
• Not sacrifice quality of teaching staff to meet diversity needs
• Mentoring
• Job shadowing
• Board members go out in community and have information sessions
• More involvement of parents
• Magnet schools, career technology schools
• Magnet for the arts
• Countywide consistency – school to school – everyone doing things differently, especially discipline, school councils
• Must have highly effective teachers
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Bulloch County Schools

- Good business model for the school system
- Focus on the customer
- Things we have already learned in the Community Engagement process are worthwhile
- Good process
- Must look a community culture
- Benchmark cultural change
- Consistant discipline

4. How can the Bulloch County schools positively influence the community?
   - Excellent job of communication about the Community Engagement Initiative
   - Communicate about upcoming events
   - Need to get more community members involved in the schools
   - Family structure sometimes limits parent involvement, but school system cannot fix this
   - Need to stress Infinite Campus more
   - Some principals need to communicate more with parents
   - Emphasis on workforce development
   - Service learning projects in academic areas results in sense of community, involved in interest areas, experience in the real world
   - Bulloch County graduates
   - Pull the community together around the schools
   - Reduce crime with educated workforce
   - School administrators already collaborate somewhat with postsecondary schools
   - School system can be a catalyst for community cultural change

5. Is there anything else you would like to say?
   - Have many community organizations interested in the schools
   - We are in better shape than most school systems
   - Stellar job with the Community Engagement Initiative
   - Commend Charles for his leadership
   - Need consistency in discipline
   - Increase rigor
FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

For the Community Engagement Initiative, 205 individuals participated in ten focus group meetings over a three-week period in April 2013. Table II indicates the groups represented, date and time and the number of individuals attending each focus group meeting. The total amount of time spent in focus group meetings was 12.6 hours, with the range of 1.08 hours to 1.42 hours and an average of 1.3 hours.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
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<td>Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>School System Employees</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4/1/2013</td>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4/1/2013</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4/2/2013</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Community Support Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4/2/2013</td>
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<td>Chamber of Commerce and Small Businesses</td>
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<tr>
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Focus Group Responses

Parents Focus Group Meeting
April 1, 2013
6:00 p.m.

1. What are the greatest strengths of Bulloch County schools?
   - Teachers care about their students
   - Teachers care about special education needs
   - Good parent involvement at elementary level
   - "We (families) know each other" - small town benefit
   - In county schools, we have a community feel...we are rural and have a connection, we are small but close
   - (Brooklet, Stilson, Portal)
   - Technology at new schools
   - Communication - newsletters, phone calls, emails returned (Portal only)

2. What needs to be improved in your child’s school?
   - Lack of parent involvement or same parents do it each time
   - Parents need to learn how to be involved
• Lack of communication from the administration and teachers to the families (students and parents)
• Parents do not feel welcomed at schools (specifically middle); parents’ interests and efforts are not appreciated nor supported so parents pull back and no longer try...which sends a message to other parents to not even offer to help
• Parents are turned away/off by principals, so parents think they (parents) have overstepped their bounds
• Exception, athletic programs or athletic boosters which are the "the path of least resistance" so parents can be connected to their child's school. Portal Middle has a unified booster club that supports/includes athletic, academic and music

3. What do you want your schools to look like in the next five years, ten years?
• County and city schools aligned
• Additions to electives at all levels - foreign languages, typing skills
• More Advanced Placement courses
• [due to the comments above] smaller schools are losing students
• Textbooks for each student to use in the classrooms
  Textbooks, online access and/or textbooks on CD for studying at home
• Improve ratio student to teacher
• Reduce class size
• Increase quality of teachers in specific areas
• Add academic extracurricular: mathematics team, model UN, Odyssey of the Mind, chess clubs, science Olympiads, etc.
• Technology and Robotics
• Graduation rate that reflects students who do not want to go college (so they will not drop out before eleventh or twelfth grade.)

4. & 5. In your family, what do you think of when you say someone is successful? How important is education to a successful life? How well prepared do you feel your child will be to graduate from high school?
• Have the skill sets to move forward
• Have tracks ex: technology, career, college
• Students feel they are not prepared for the next level
• Our high school teachers are not qualified in areas
• Disruptive students are added to student numbers to increase #s on reports/quotas
• Curriculum does not allow for separation of disruptive students or underperforming students
• How do we break that cycle when funding is tied to numbers and to test scores?
• How will we fix all of that?
• Stop being politically correct

6. Do you feel that students are being provided the technology skills they need for the future?
• Yes, what students do today is amazing; students are doing great - but most of it is because they are curious or learn on their own or from other students/friends
• No, lack of writing skills; it is a lost art now; students cannot read cursive
• Lack of grammar skills - they can pick it out or identify it on a test, but not write it or speak it
• Lack of communication skills – interpersonal
• Technology is overused
• No typing/keyboarding skills - not offered first - eighth grade
• Students cannot critically think because they run to the computer; they know how to "find" information and answers, but they do not know "how" to "use" the information; students cannot make decisions

7. Do you feel students are continually challenged by school? (See earlier comments also)
• Need more Advanced Placement courses
• Materials and resources not available
• Disruptive students are time consuming and distracting
• Lack of projects and required outside research

8. & 9. Does your child struggle academically? If so, does he/she receive the help needed? Do you think the schools respond to the needs of your child?
• Classes are overcrowded
• Not enough supplies, textbooks for each student nor to take home
• Teaching to the test too much
• Pushing "memorizing" for the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests - not learning
• At middle school, only mathematics tutoring available
• At high school, some teachers seem willing to provide if asked; tutoring offered but students do not take advantage of it - stigma of "you must be failing if you need tutoring"
• Teachers care about special education needs
• Again the issue of county vs. city schools; do not teachers in the city get extra money to tutor?

9. Do you think the schools respond to the needs of your child?
• Why are we not reexamining our choices and decisions, such as facilities (due to regulations, legalities, ESPLOSTs, etc.)?
• What are our priorities? We can build new schools and sports complex, but not have enough textbooks, supplies, or computers in a lab?
• New schools are beautiful with all the bells and whistles, but beautiful does not go toward teaching or the quality of instruction
• New buildings had poor planning, not designed for (population) growth or curriculum changes

10. & 11. Do you feel welcomed at your child's school? How do you feel when you visit your child's school? How are you treated by the staff, principal, and teachers? How do you feel when someone says parents need to be more involved in their children's education? In what ways do you participate in your child's education?
• In the mornings at schools, teachers do not speak to students or parents, they are chitchatting/gossiping or complaining with each other, in their own world
• We do not let parents know how to get involved throughout the year
• Most parents only know Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
• Leaders/staff only call on "the ones they know will help" over and over
• We do not use the resources we have (some have time, others have resources) or parents sign up...but do not follow through
• Parent portal is great on website but only if teachers keep it up-to-date; but parents that do not have pc access or are computer illiterate are at a disadvantage
• Lacking consistency - lack of posting; no lesson plans, which books are you using so we can buy our own, teachers not using webpages, or grades not updated (so it shows up as
failing or missing - so that circumvents the parent’s communication) - robo calls and teachers sending emails

- At the high school level - most teachers do not email or communicate with parents; some ninth and tenth grade teachers forget they are young and need more communication; if parents are expected to help outside the classroom then we need to know what is going on
- Keep website updated and robo calls updated, more often (middle schools not using at all)

12. What are your feelings regarding discipline at your school?
- Very little discipline at all levels
- Remember teachers are limited on how they can discipline
- A few disruptive students can wipe out hours of learning time for the rest of the class
- Classes have extremes - discipline issues vs. high achievers
- Langston Chapel Middle School does a good job - issues are dealt with at William James Middle School there are expectations
- In some schools, there is no supervision in common areas - fights in halls/lunchroom - running between classes - profanity and yelling - little supervision at car pick up, dances, club meetings, etc.

13. Is there anything else you want to share?
- Should counselors point students in direction; students should decide by junior year; some counselors in tune (Statesboro High School); other counselors do not do anything (Portal High School)
- Again, parents need to be involved in high school decision-making
- Statesboro High School is strong in partnerships with Ogeechee Technical College and Georgia Southern University; ex: work-ready programs
- At William James Middle School, there are two students who are 16 years old - that is a huge difference in maturity, etc. from the eleven-year olds that are in sixth grade. What message does that send?

Assistant Principals Focus Group Meeting
April 2, 2013
2:45 p.m.

1. What are the greatest strengths of the Bulloch County schools?
- Teachers want to be good, reach vision
- Resources—Ogeechee Technical College, Georgia Southern University, and East Georgia State College
- Partnership with mentoring student teachers, volunteers, student teachers
- Strong leadership—school and central office
- New buildings
- Strong technology department (student and instructional)
- Offer extra activities (chess, drama, etc.)
- Recreation Department relationships
- Initiated learning communities for Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
- Have schools working together

2. What are the greatest challenges of the Bulloch County schools?
- Large number of student population
• Zoning issues
• Parent involvement
• Funding
• Larger class sizes
• Discipline with elementary students (no place for them)
• Size of county (busing)
• Equity across high schools (Advanced Placement and Career, Technical, Agricultural Education (CTAE) elective classes)
• Equity in elementary schools (class sizes)
• Speed on how we are pushing people to get things done (resiliency of staff)
• All need to strive for the vision - not wait it out
• Transient students

3. What do you want your schools to be like in the next five to ten years?
• Manageable class size
• Student-driven instruction, progressing at own rate
• Attendance - want 100%
• Students can tell you why they are learning content in classroom

4. Are students prepared for success in postsecondary institutions and/or careers when they graduate from Bulloch County schools? For those who are not, what would help them to be more prepared?
• No at Portal - no Advanced Placement classes offered
• Rigor not where it needs to be
• Problem with tardiness
• Affective skills needed to manage conflict. Some special needs students are not prepared

5. Do you think students are being provided the technology skills they need for the future?
• Skills - yes; reasoning to use effectively - no
• Yes - everyday part of their life
• Bringing own technology to school?
  ▶ Hard to monitor
  ▶ Yes - good thing
  ▶ Try it
• Need to educate on digital footprint (responsible technology use)
• Not according to eighth grade technology test

6. How are stakeholders involved in the Bulloch County schools? Is their involvement beneficial?
• Guest speakers
• Recruiters
• Career, Technical, Agricultural Education (CTAE) advisory groups
• Field trips
• Missed Opportunities
  ▶ Bring instructors into school (Ogeechee Technical College)
  ▶ More classroom connections with Georgia Southern University and gifted services
  ▶ Mentorships with student
  ▶ Medical and mental health field - school-based health clinics

7. Do you use continuous improvement processes and tools in your work? Are they beneficial?
• Professional learning communities
• Need common assessments
• Write Score
• School Keys
8. Describe your professional learning opportunities. How would you improve them?
   - PD360
   - Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
   - Instructional-based strategies
   - Focus money — positive behavior
   - Amy Dean (teacher behavior training)

9. Do your teachers personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual needs of students?
   - Teachers do not understand differentiated instruction
   - Flexible grouping
   - How do you monitor instruction in classroom?
     - Be in classroom
     - Equity at schools — harder at some schools
   - Georgia Assessment of Progress on School Standards (GAPSS) assessment — using those with some schools

10. Is bullying a problem?
    - Yes
    - Definition is different
    - No social skills
    - Issue at staff level

11. Are students in your school treated with respect?
    - Yes
    - Some are product of environment—have to teach them
    - Understand maturity level of child

12. How well do you and your colleagues interact with parents?
    - Teachers try (attempt)
    - Functions at schools (mother/daughter, father/son)
    - Parent liaison helpful
    - Parents receptive to what we have to say
    - Need more mentoring programs for parents
    - Sensitivity training needed
    - Parents only come when there’s a problem (middle/high)
    - Fun things more parental involvement
    - Hard to get in touch with parents (numbers change)
    - We have to teach children and raise children
    - Parents cannot do anything with them
    - Teacher websites (study guides, assignments)
    - Extend parent conferences longer into night/next day off (for parents who work)
    - Rethink parent conference day

13. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?
    - Raises
    - Keep Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) until we get common assessments in elementary
    - Students with Disabilities — they’ve got to do better — build more time in their school day
    - Reallocating resources to kindergarten – twelfth grade students hit deficits — reduction in number of special needs student
• Expand prekindergarten program
• Revamp curriculum in prekindergarten classes — not preparing them for kindergarten

14. Five-year wishes
• An alternative school that explicitly teaches the behavior and affective skills to reintegrate students successfully into their home schools

Students Focus Group Meeting
April 1, 2013
11:00 a.m.

1. What are the greatest strengths of your school?
• Sports and athletics
• School spirit – everyone is energetic and excited
• One-on-one time with teachers
• Classes are smaller and teachers encourage students
• Teachers are funny and it helps learning happen

2. As a student, what are your greatest challenges at school?
• Bullying is a lot to face – was bullied at home and at school since the second grade – beat up in the bathroom and almost drowned and that has affected my grades – it is not happening any longer, but happened at the first of this year. My principal has stopped it
• Peer pressure – doing what you do not want to do
• Bullying makes you not want to leave your classroom
• Distractions of other students
• Seven periods affect units/credits you receive
• Learning environment is not affected because of discipline at our school
• Other students spreading fake rumors

3. What do you want your schools to be like in the next five years, ten years?
• More black teachers
• More Advanced Placement classes
• Be able to use our electronics
• Efficiency of teachers because they do not know technology
• Teachers and principals listen to both sides of the story
• Better discipline

4. Do you think the teachers care about you individually? How do you know?
• Feels it depends on the student and their behavior in class
• You can tell when teachers do not care about you
• Our teachers go by the behavior of students
• Feels teachers care because the way they joke with them
• Hateful speeches from teacher
• Teachers not following through with what they say they will do
• Racism from all races of teachers – they support the race they are

5. Do you understand what your teachers expect from you?
• Yes
• Most rules written are generic
• Teachers are too loose when it comes to follow-through

6. Each year, are you prepared for the next year?
• Yes
7. What do you plan to do after you graduate? Do you plan to go to college, technical school, or the military? Do you think you will be prepared for it?
   - Want scholarship to extend learning
   - College to get a degree
   - Graduate, college, masters, entrepreneur
   - College, masters, doctor
   - No one interested in military

8. Do you think what you learn at school will be relevant to you as an adult?
   - Somewhat
   - No, not good with decisions
   - Counselor goes into every class to discuss college helps a lot
   - Statesboro High School students have to make an appointment with the counselor - feels counselor should take the initiative to contact students
   - Group is aware of GaCollege411
   - Depends on what I decide to do after high school
   - Feels it needs to relate more to life
   - Feels some mathematics, science and history they already know and will not help in life
   - Some things they are teaching are useless
   - Some teachers need to help show the connection to life
   - Teachers will do some things, test, and move on without everyone understanding
   - Yes, some more than others
   - Lessons that are repeated in different ways are a waste of time
   - Repetitive with information rather than going on to new information
   - When teaching they want a different answer when they are asking the same question
   - Middle school students get more enforcement than high school
   - Was not as hard to adjust to high school than it was to middle school
   - Stress of finding classes
   - Attended school in a different state, so getting used to the people who are around you was challenging

9. Do you feel you are continually challenged by your teachers? Why or Why not?
   - Yes, but there needs to be more discipline in the class room
   - Fights – if coaches find out about it they have to do 29 "suicides"
   - Discipline is a lot better at Portal High School since the new principal has been there
   - Mr. Haralson was her first principal and he gave her her first paddling when she was in elementary school
   - Discipline because teachers do not follow-through with what they say they are going to do
   - Our teachers are respected
   - Students know their principal means business so they hardly ever have any fights and no one acts up because they know the principal will refer them to the Transitions Learning Center (TLC)
   - Feels teachers would be more respected if they would follow-through with what they say they are going to do
   - Teachers need to stop lecturing everyone when only a few are doing something wrong and do something about the people who are doing wrong
   - Discipline is a joke at our school when sent to the principal

10. Do your teachers give you the help you need when you do not understand?
    - Teachers put names on the board for silent lunch if you get the answer wrong
    - During lessons teacher will help if you have a question
    - If fail a class they have mandatory tutoring after school
    - Students take the initiative to go to tutoring
• More high school than middle school
• Teachers are forced to teach to the End-of-Course Tests as long as there are these tests that is what they will do
• Teachers do not like End-of-Course Tests
• End-of-Course Tests hinder high achievers
• End-of-Course Tests weighted 20% of grade and put a curve on it. Can miss one question and make 96 and can miss five and make a 95 this only helps low achievers
• Aimed toward lower achieving students and brings higher achievers scores down
• Students stressed out when taking the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests
• Tests averaged differently for failing students
• Curving grades do not help
• I am in advance mathematics – regular mathematics students get a chance to correct their answers but advance mathematics class does not
• My school does not have Advanced Placement classes
• Discouraged to take Advanced Placement classes because will bring grade down
• Some students take online Advanced Placement classes and they are too hard because they have not been prepared previously
• My school has different levels of tutoring for classes
• Middle school needs more advanced classes because if there were more advanced classes it would help in high school
• Advanced Placement examination is tough
• Feels level of rigor should be higher and does not feel students are challenged
• Some students do not see when lessons will benefit them
• Tested for Quest and did well on everything except creative question/section – felt that there was an inadequate amount of time to draw something. When you have a project in school, you are given more time so that should not be a factor in being tested for Quest.

11. Do you feel safe at school?
• Generally feels safe – brother was attacked in class but, other than that everything has been okay – everything is good now
• I feel safe when in class
• Layout of the school is safe
• Emotional abuse should not be a problem if you have strong character
• Two students were fighting over a seat in the lunchroom and one got their teeth knocked out – students were emotionally scarred by this fight
• Sheriff deputies walk through about every two weeks
• One student said they need to have a lock down
• Police officers walk through which is good for school safety

12. Do you feel that you are being provided the technology skills you need for future?
• Do not feel it is as hard for students as it is for teachers
• Cannot teach an old dog new tricks
• Once teachers have training it helps

13. Are you using your technology capabilities to the full potential currently in school? e.g., smartphones, tablets, etc.?
• Would depend on what we are doing
• Laptop would help in Advanced Placement classes
• Students say they are using Google for research when they really are not
• iPads make you want to learn
• It would be hard to ensure everyone is doing what they should be doing if allowed to use their own tech equipment
• Recently a student stole one from a teacher
• It would be hard to police
14. If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?
   - Clean bathrooms and close stalls off so no one can see you when you are trying to use the bathroom
   - More variety of food
   - New food is beneficial, but students do not understand federal regulations/guidelines
   - Bad idea to cut down on portions especially when you're in athletics
   - They have lost the variety of foods they once had
   - Funding to other departments, knows it is expensive but some of money should go to other programs like arts and academics
   - Football field funding got cut too
   - Teachers have furlough days
   - Teacher efficiency – trying out different methods
   - Student discipline needs to improve

15. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?
   - Standardized tests hurt grades
   - In Advanced Placement classes if a student can pass the class, why do they have to take the End-of-Course Tests or weight the grades?
   - Do not feel Economics classes need to take End-of-Course Tests
   - Change seven period to block like Statesboro High School and Southeast Bulloch High School
   - Middle school students miss physical education – some students do not get to do any athletics and physical education classes/recess is the only activity they get
   - Take out Criterion Referenced Competency Tests on last day of school
   - The A/B schedule for Advanced Placement really helped, would like to see it re-implemented
   - Place an emphasis on other leadership classes and programs other than always athletics

Comments from students arriving late:
   - Good relationship with teachers
   - Teachers do challenge students and make an effort to do so
   - Spanish is especially challenging
   - Teachers do coach for college and encourage them to take the Advanced Placement classes

School System Employee Focus Group Meeting
April 1, 2013
1:00 p.m.

1. What are the greatest strengths of Bulloch County schools?
   - Exceptional teachers who are very caring and put a lot of energy and time into lesson planning
   - Technology-teachers are keeping up to date with latest trends
   - Many outlets for students outside of school like sports, Career, Technical, Agricultural Education (CTAE), clubs, etc.
   - Strong Board of Education
   - Very accepting of diverse learners such as special education and English Language Learners
   - Puts forth a lot of effort toward struggling students
   - After-school tutors
   - Pyramid of Intervention system
   - Safe and drug free schools
• County has really tried to help growing pains with Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

2. What are the greatest challenges of Bulloch County schools?
• Money
• Funding for programs
• Discipline - families are not helping out like they used to…just not there
• Society has put burden on teachers….teachers are teachers, nurse, counselor, disciplinarian, etc.
• Building capacity at some schools
• Community resistance to change for attendance
• Mobility of students
• Sharing personnel is challenging like Pyramid of Intervention Coordinator, assistant principal, etc.
• Maintaining the focus of the students
• Teachers strive to maintain balance with teaching and behavior
• Getting in touch with parents
• Set up Parent Portal
• Transportation is unavailable
• Lack of parental involvement

3. What do you want your schools to be like in the next five to ten years?
• Parents to come and spend a day with their child
• More parent involvement
• Small class sizes
• Full time technology specialist, full time assistant principal, etc.
• Create a policy about tardiness

4. Are students prepared for success in postsecondary institutions and/or careers when they graduate from the Bulloch County schools?
• Some are/some are not
• Students are limited based on what high school they attend
• The advanced students are not getting everything they need

5. Do you think students are being continually challenged by teachers? Why or why not?
• Advanced Placement classes challenge students
• There is a big gap between “Advanced Placement” classes compared to “College Prep” classes.
• Over the years the high school level of rigor has dropped
• At the middle school level, the students are not allowed to fail....so students do not put forth the effort necessary because they know they cannot get a zero without the teacher having to provide them multiple opportunities to do work and then a parent contact as well.
• The student work ethic is not there anymore
• Teachers cannot challenge students because there are so many levels and so many children in one class
• Parents cannot assist students at home because they are unable to do the work
• After-school tutoring is vital

6. How are stakeholders involved in the Bulloch County schools? Is their involvement beneficial?
• Great partnerships with Georgia Southern University with education majors....volunteers
• Career Days at elementary schools can be inspiring
• Volunteer Readers come every so often
• Chick-fil-A is great
Unfortunately, no discretionary funds are available any more from many private businesses to support local schools. The Foundation is a community group created for teachers that awards mini grants and is great.

7. Do you use continuous improvement processes and tools in your work? Are they beneficial?
   - Professional Learning Communities
   - School Improvement Teams
   - Instructional Teams
   - Parent Teams
   - Student Teams
   - Common Intervention Time
   - But know that teachers are stretched.

8. Describe your professional learning opportunities. How would you improve them?
   - A lot of opportunities to participate in classes during the year and during the summer
   - At some schools, media specialists teach classes after school for interested teachers and paraprofessionals
   - Common Core Georgia Performance Standards training across the system
   - Paraprofessionals would like to see some training for them ….especially SmartBoard, Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, computer classes, anything really.
   - Media specialists should have been somewhat informed about Common Core Georgia Performance Standards since it pertained to novels as they could have given input that may have saved the county money.

9. Do your teachers personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual needs of students?
   - Yes
   - Intervention enrichment time
   - Some administrators make certain that materials are available to meet the needs of our learners

10. What are your feelings regarding discipline at your school?
    - Elementary Alternative School would be great!
    - Schools cater too much to the students who misbehave. Some students who are habitual offenders need some more realistic/harsher consequences
    - The handling of discipline is very inconsistent across the system and even within one school
    - System wide there needs to be more male role models
    - Class size is an issue

11. Is bullying an issue?
    - Yes, bullying is an issue
    - Too many students to watch….for example 200 students during a transition and eight teachers
    - Bathrooms can be an issue….students say they need to use the restroom and then text
    - Students need to be bolstered so that they learn coping skills and not just be a victim
    - Character Education needs to be implemented again

12. Are students in your school treated with respect?
    - High school students can be disrespectful
    - The basic norms and mores are gone…no “good morning”
    - Environments are very unfriendly-parents do not even talk to students anymore
    - Parents quite often are respectful to their own students
• The students know that the teachers, paraprofessionals and custodians in the schools care about them

13. Do you feel that you are being provided the technology/skills you need?
• A lot of the computers and equipment in the school are getting old and starting not to work
• Students need to have more technology “stuff” more so than the teachers

14. How do you feel about students bringing their own technology to school?
• No way
• Yes, and teach them how and when to appropriately use it

15. Is there anything else you would like to share?
• Within the schools, the teachers have a lot on their plate
• Do the board of education and central office folks go into schools on a regular basis? It seems like the only time the board of education and central office folks come around is if it is a crisis management or if they might be embarrassed about something. Do they sincerely want to know what is going on in the schools?
• To teach you have to really care and love your job
• We need to reinstate character education, it is needed. Every day the whole team...not just for the students
• Funding.....a system funded a manners curriculum and it made the biggest difference in the system from the top down
• Zoning—it has been on the table, under the table and swept under the rug. If there were equity among the schools, it would be great
• It seems like it is a very political issue
• Sometimes transportation is the tail that wags the dog
• Furloughing...investigate other ways to save money....this is hurting morale and staff.
• No money for substitutes, no money for departments, some teachers at some schools have to pay for materials to fund their department out of their own pocket or write grants.
• Thankfully Georgia Southern University has some grant funds to help lab sciences at Portal Middle/High School
• County grant writer is needed
• Think more creatively to cut funds
• Forget the derelicts and praise the positive students
• Nevils Middle School wants window blinds

Community Support Services Focus Group Meeting
April 2, 2013
9:00 a.m.

1. What are the strengths of the Bulloch County schools?
• Open lines of communication, can talk to school leaders and Board of Education and they are responsive to feedback
• Strong counseling centers
• Open to community engagement, looking to use community resources
• Facilities
• High quality teachers – good pool of candidates because of proximity to Georgia Southern University
• Diversity of programs to meet individual needs and produce well-rounded graduates
• Extracurricular engagement

2. What are the greatest challenges of the Bulloch County schools?
• Managing growing population – continuing to meet needs
- School safety, isolation difficult
- Keeping non-traditional students engaged
- Drop-out rate
- Keeping up with technology
- Strengthening relationship between Bulloch County schools and the charter school
- Perception of public schools – parents enroll in private schools because they are running away from public schools
- Full development of children (spiritual growth), keeping sanctity of Sundays, not necessarily teaching religion
- Being aware of all community resources
- Increased academic demands (Common Core Georgia Performance Standards) takes away social needs – drop-out rates, pregnancy rates, drug/alcohol use increased

3. What are the greatest needs of families in the Bulloch County community?
   - Driver’s Education – needed for life skills – impacts ability to get job, etc. Both a safety and academic issue

4. What do you want your schools to be like in the next five years, ten years?
   - More diversity
   - Students progressing at their own rate
   - Fewer pregnancies and drop outs
   - Preventative education
   - More community partnerships
   - Increased work readiness
   - Increased law enforcement presence in schools
   - More faith-based activities in schools (not classrooms)
   - Less focus on standardized testing and the separation of that testing from funding. Good test scores should not equal more money or financial gain. Too much pressure and it encourages people to falsify test results

5. Are students prepared for success in postsecondary institutions and/or careers when they graduate from the Bulloch County schools? For those who are not, what would help them to be more prepared?
   - No accountability, work ethic or acceptance of responsibility
   - Parents make excuses and take care of things
   - Cannot even enforce basic things like tardiness
   - Not taught to think or solve problems – where is there a place for you in the job market without those skills?
   - Need a realistic perspective on what they are going to do after graduation – all students are not going to college
   - Need to know life skills – how to make a budget, balance a checkbook, manage money, etc.
   - Technology integration

6. Do you feel that students are being provided the technology skills they need for the future?
   - Students have technology skills, but are they productive – is it used effectively?
   - Not taught professional uses of technology
   - Bring Your Own Technology – thoughts seem positive – teaching appropriate use of technology does not take the place of basic skills and learning to think

7. What is your involvement in the Bulloch County schools? Is it beneficial?
   - Counseling system, high school liaison, give tours to college prospects
   - On an as-needed basis (crisis-based)
   - College leaders who mentor high school students and are visible in the school system
8. Are there other opportunities for partnerships that would benefit you and the Bulloch County schools? If so, what are they?
   - DARE program
   - Private driver’s education and school system - The superintendent is changing the relationship, but other school systems allow promotion of the program in their schools

9. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?
   - Will feedback be published? Request could be made under open-records act – not sure how the information will be shared
   - Developing stronger partnerships with the school and parents – making parents accountable for increased success
   - Basic skills for English Language Learner students – do not rely too heavily on technology
   - Budget – cutting funds/furloughs should be a last resort – would like to see classrooms prioritized when considering funding – cuts should start at the top – not with teachers and classrooms. Classrooms should be the last thing impacted.
   - Schools should not be scared to deal with students or scared to teach them certain lessons – seems like we have to be so much more sensitive these days

Ogeechee Technical College and Large Industries Focus Group Meeting
April 2, 2013
1:00 p.m.

1. What are the greatest strengths of Bulloch County schools?
   - Facilities-the schools are really nice
   - Partnerships with Ogeechee Technical College and Georgia Southern University
   - Over the last four to five years as the school system has grown the district has been quick to address parent concerns (at least it appears that way on the surface) so as to avoid large issues
   - Pretty strong dedication to serve all students such as the students who are on the technical track
   - Focus/concern for students who choose not to attend a four-year college
   - Briggs and Stratton had students out to shadow employees and it was very positive
   - Each high school has advisory committees and outside people serve on those committees such as those from the technical school
   - Counselors at Statesboro High School start with a cohort and stay with them all four years…this is very helpful

2. What are the greatest challenges of the Bulloch County schools?
   - There needs to be a better understanding of what industry really is
   - Teachers in our schools are all academics and they do not really know about the opportunities of industry
   - Faculty and staff need to be better educated about the industries in our community and surrounding communities
   - There is a large difference between the elementary schools within the city/district
   - Some companies have a hard time retaining employees who have not had their elementary students/children zoned to the “better” elementary schools
   - Dual enrollment issue…bell schedule for all three high schools is different. Because of this Ogeechee Technical College has a hard time offering classes to high school students equitably
   - Seems like each school has their own vision and therefore there is a disconnect among schools/central office
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- If board members represent one district and not the school system as a whole then there is no unity and that further fosters a disconnect
- Some leadership at high school are not supportive of dual enrollment
- People need to think of the students' best interest

3. What do you want the Bulloch County schools to be like in the next five, ten years?
   - The schools should reach out more to the business and industry
   - The schools should be more aggressive in sending out invitations to management of business and industry
   - Soft skills like being able to interact with each other and be a team player are vital
   - Attendance and punctuality are vital
   - Being able to make a connection with “the real world”
   - Appropriate dress for interviews or job fairs
   - Increase communication between schools, parents, and students. There should be no surprises when it comes to grades or other issues....parents should be more engaged
   - Parents should be more involved because when they are not older siblings often take the role of parent and inappropriate behaviors influence the younger students
   - When scheduling open house please do so later because 5:30-6:30 is unrealistic for working parents
   - School system should gravitate more toward some experimental schools
   - Graduates should know the importance of the term, “due date”
   - Graduates should know the importance of professionalism
   - Graduates should have skills because there are a lot of good paying jobs that do not require a four-year degree but the graduate needs to know that attendance and punctuality are important
   - Communication skills are vital...how to write an email, how to express a thought, how to read
   - In the real world there are not a lot of multiple chances, there are no extensions, or partial credits

4. What specific skills do graduates of the Bulloch County schools need?
   - Communication skills
   - Accountability
   - The system always faults the teacher and deals with the parents easily and thus those students often make poor employees
   - Students do not know how to function because their parents have always “fixed everything”
   - More learning “hands on”
   - Learn by doing and interacting not just sitting because that is unrealistic
   - Example....falling asleep during an orientation meeting, late 17 out of 31 days of work, covering a visible tattoo with a band aid but bringing a bag of chips to eat during an interview
   - Would like to see career academy
   - Occupational courses like welding
   - Lab environments would be great
   - Dual enrollment
   - Advisors to teach students
   - Work ethic skills taught
   Do you think students are being provided the technology skills they need for the future?
   - Do they know technology?
   - Yes, but it is not appropriate
   - Seventy percent of the employees at one company can play any computer game but cannot fill out a simple health insurance online form and have to have others do it for them
5. Are the career pathways available in the Bulloch County schools beneficial? Are there others that would be beneficial as well?
   - Instructors do not have time to get a good program/pathway started before changes are made….find something that works and stick to it

6. What is your involvement in Bulloch County schools? Is it beneficial? Are there other opportunities for partnerships that would benefit you and other Bulloch County schools? If so, what are they?
   - Hosting this type of forum on an annual basis
   - Knowing that there would be multiple or annual opportunities to share feedback
   - It would help to make a positive impact
   - Sack Company will have an apprenticeship program and Statesboro High School - will allow visits with school construction students
   - The accountability is with the system as well….at Ogeechee Technical College out of 1500 surveyed students from Bulloch County only 20 went into their nursing program. Ogeechee Technical College feels like that need to do a better job as well.
   - This report needs to be shared and all stakeholders need to come together again and review goals (Industry and Technical)
   - All stakeholders should be in a service role to help students become the best that they can be
   - Academic administrators - Georgia Southern University, Ogeechee Technical College, - high school principals - all need to have face-to-face meetings often to discuss expectations. This would be a great advantage because a number of faculty members already serve on many different boards and these meetings could create action

7. What Skills Are Needed by Graduates?
   - Problem-solving skills are essential…graduates may not know all the answers but should be able to figure out how to find the answer. This is a skill across several industries/careers
   - A Work Ready certification would be great….is this still being utilized? Did it die?
   - Know what “real life” is like
   - Are the students ready to come to work?
   - If they have a Work Ready certificate it will put a graduate at the top of the heap
   - Do high schools encourage Work Ready certificates?
   - Channel students toward this certificate
   - Schools of Excellence-what happened to these? Knowing in the middle school what happened in elementary school and knowing in the high school what happened in the middle school will help schools obtain this distinction
   - More communication among schools is necessary

Chamber of Commerce and Small Businesses Focus Group Meeting
April 2, 2013
11:00 a.m.

1. What are the greatest strengths of the Bulloch County schools?
   - Facilities and the resources as they continue to grow (repeated three times)
   - The new SmartBoards in the schools
   - The teachers, the use of Georgia Southern University student teachers
   - Good partnership with Georgia Southern University and Ogeechee Technical College to help the students as they get ready to go out into the world
   - Connection with the work study programs with the community and getting students ready for the real world (repeated three)
   - The administration has done a really good job with helping the system navigate during the economic struggle, having a plan for attrition in order to address budget issues
2. What are the greatest challenges of the Bulloch County schools?
   - I hear the frustration from teachers on how things change from year to year, the tests and the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests...not being able to provide a good solid learning environment for the students and having to teach a certain way.
   - I feel that there is a lot of stress brought on by the mandates of how to teach
   - Furloughs, but still being expected to do the extra duties
   - Too much emphasis placed on the standardized tests...concern of teaching to the test
   - The teaching methods and the cookie-cutter model...allow the teachers to teach their way
   - The continuous change in the way teachers are to teach from year to year
   - The teachers having to take on additional responsibilities other than teaching...tutoring, after-school events, making phone calls...the automatic phone calling system, emails to parents

3. What are the greatest needs of families in the Bulloch County community?
   - The Chamber would like feedback from businesses to allow parents to gain support from community organizations willing to offer services and training
   - Integration between Ogeechee Technical College and Georgia Southern University with the schools to provide more trade and skills early on
   - A huge initiative to provide information on what is available in the community on what kind of jobs and skills are needed and available
   - The creation of an advisement program and offer the students some type of advisement on what students would like to do
   - Start early even in middle school and let students know what is available, the salaries, and what it will take to get a certain type of job
   - Lot more focus on local students/industry to train our own...at the hospital we recruit many nurses from Georgia Southern University ...we train them, hire them and then they leave us to return home
   - A one-on-one with a pathway person that will provide the students more guidance - more than one visit

4. What do you want the Bulloch County schools to be like in the next five to ten years?
   - I would want all the schools to be the same whether it is at Portal or Statesboro High School. We hear that certain schools are better than others
   - I would like to see more equality as it relates to education and class sizes
   - I think it is due to the size of the community, say Southeast Bulloch High School vs. Portal High School and Statesboro High School that warrants the class sizes
   - What can we do better to educate and inform? Some parents do not have access to the social media – iPhones, computers...how does the teacher reach these families?

5. Are students prepared for success in postsecondary institutions and/or careers when they graduate from Bulloch County schools? For those who are not, what would help them to be more prepared?
   - Writing and communication skills are horrible. Need to improve these skills!
   - Students use text talk when they should use proper language in certain settings...example: completing a job application or inquiring about a job
   - Being able to interact better with people face-to-face in a group setting, not just rely on email....there is a huge lack in emotional intelligence and interacting skills

6. Do you feel that students are being provided the technology skills they need for the future?
   - Yes
   - The students who work while in college are better employees vs. those who did not work. Work study would help students while in high school to be better prepared for the workforce
7. What is your involvement in the Bulloch County schools? Is it beneficial?
   - Volunteers at the hospital from college and high school in order to provide them skills and exposure in the medical field
   - More community exposure for student to volunteer in facilities, i.e. nursing homes, hospitals, and churches
   - Gentilly Gardens is willing to provide more real life experiences.
   - Can we integrate into the curriculum a requirement for students to complete volunteer hours as part of graduation requirement?
   - AgSouth reaches out to the Future Farmers of America to provide them opportunities, we award scholarships to students but not many students take advantage of it...the counselors receive the information, but we do not get many replies from the schools even when we contact the schools numerous, numerous time
   - Need to get more call backs from the schools when we reach out to recruit students for work study opportunities

8. Are there other opportunities for partnerships that would benefit you and the Bulloch County schools? If so, what are they?
   - Shadow days for students
   - Early release for shadow days for students
   - There are numerous organizations that want to help, it’s just a lack of communication and getting in contact with the students who are willing and letting them know about opportunities in the community
   - I think the students do not feel a tie here in the community
   - We do a lot through sports…player of the week award. I think the students need to be doing something more constructive when they leave school early
   - A community advisory board needs to be created in the school system in order to place all of the community needs on the calendar and offer a chance for students to sign-up and earn community service hours…I am sure that businesses will be willing to sponsor and make donations for the program
   - Model organizations that are already doing well - 4-H Club and Future Farmers of America
   - Let businesses know what the needs are and send it out - there is a lack of communication
   - Small business workshops to present to students during the school day - teaching skills needed to obtain certain jobs/employment
   - Can there be a person who can coordinate this program and collect the information community needs and communicate with the business owners?
   - For example, provide an opportunity for students to come out and learn the printing skills for jobs to be done locally; this may spark an interest early on
   - Internships

9. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?
   - Safety concerns…no soap in the bathroom to prevent infection and spread of germs.
   - Security Plan - what is the plan for the system? Are there cameras and who is watching them?
   - I am comfortable with what Statesboro High School has done with the security on campus
   - Is there a plan in place should something happen like Sandy Hook…emergency preparedness plan? What about the county schools should there be a crisis?
Community Support Services Focus Group Meeting
April 1, 2013
3:00 p.m.

1. What are the greatest strengths of the Bulloch County schools?
   - Teachers
   - Technology focused
   - Parent involvement
   - Facilities – new, good conditions and new with good environment

2. What are the greatest challenges of the Bulloch County schools?
   - Economy/the cuts
   - Higher poverty rates in the birth - 17 age range
   - Lack of parental involvement
   - An administration to reflect the students that are being served...try to better recruit more a diverse population of teachers to reflect the population being served...mirror the population
   - Class size
   - Teacher burn-out
   - A large divide among the students....the have and the have not's. The have-not group of children is getting larger and larger with very little parental involvement. How do you serve the children with limited resources and make sure they get their needs met...how do you make ends meet in the middle?
   - Number #1 problem is bureaucracy – furlough days
   - Constant change in the environment that disrupts teaching
   - The lack of home resources for the disadvantaged students vs. those students who have
   - Students being offered tutoring when needed.
   - What options do students have when they are struggling with the content? Differentiated instruction seems to be very good in the system

3. What are the greatest needs of families in the Bulloch County community?
   - Literacy among a large number of families

4. What do you want the Bulloch County schools to be like in the next five to ten years?
   - Do away with standardized testing, the students are being tested so much which requires teachers to spend majority of time preparing
   - See more soft skills being offered, more reinforcement is necessary
   - See more equity for all students in the outer area schools and not just in the inner city schools... example, Advanced Placement courses

5. Are students prepared for success in postsecondary institutions and/or careers when they graduate from Bulloch County schools?
   - Some are, but some do not identify early enough what they want to do...maybe a lack of parental involvement at home to discuss career choices....waiting too late (junior year) to decide especially when they are athletes and they fail to have the appropriate course credits to continue at the college level
   - More guidance counseling offered to the students to help them
   - Motivation to do the career program sooner and tours at Ogeechee Technical College beginning with the middle school students
   - Being prepared with the financial assistance in order to obtain scholarships, for examples academics and athletics
   - I wonder if this does not have anything with the school system not preparing our students with the appropriate skills in order to go further after high school with the appropriate
credentials…let us be realistic, how many seventh graders really know what they want to do in life?

- I believe the parents should also be a motivator as well in helping students decide what they want to do in life
- As a substitute teacher, I see that many students are comfortable talking with me because from a student viewpoint, many students feel as if they are not being treated fairly in the classroom…segregation in the classroom and that some teachers do not want to hear what they have to say or their feelings
- For those who are not, what would help them to be more prepared?

6. Do you feel that students are being provided the technology skills they need for the future?
   - I think that teachers do a great job of teaching them technology, but not how to complete a job application correctly…students become too dependent on computers
   - Students not knowing how to maintain without the use of technology…the old fashion way of how to manage money

7. What is your involvement in the Bulloch County schools? Is it beneficial?
   - Offering tutoring after-school at the Bethesda Home, feeding them
   - Ogeechee Technical College offering student support in the General Education Diploma program when students leave the system, and telling students to quit school and get their General Education Diploma …many times the teachers are not aware of what they are setting the students up for
   - The system needs to have a better understanding of what it is to get a General Education Diploma and not encourage students to quit when they get pregnant
   - Being involved with the scholarships for both public and charter schools students, not allowing students to be a part of the system if they are not able to function in the normal school system, but then those students excel when they go to the charter school

8. Are there other opportunities for partnerships that would benefit you and the Bulloch County schools? If so, what are they?
   - Rotary Club: there seems to be a lot of interests in clubs and groups to work with the school system, but not enough effort to coordinate the efforts willing to be a part of the many resources available
   - There is a lot of support for literacy

9. How does your organization – or how could your organization – fit into the school improvement efforts of the Bulloch County schools?
   - More mentoring programs for people in poverty…modeling and communication from the elementary age on to adulthood
   - I think we expect too much of the teachers and guidance counselors
   - I think it is better to serve them rather than just throw money. Just tap into the resources we currently have
   - Our society today is not as it used to be. Now a 10-year old will tell you “do not touch me”
   - Our culture will not allow us to get more involved, the system will not allow us. Maybe we can come into the schools and provide them (problem students) support
   - Things are made so difficult now, that many people do not want to get involved

10. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?
    - You have not addressed the pass rate. Why do we have fifth graders who cannot read and write?
    - You should not have 20% of students in fifth and sixth grade who cannot read….what is it?
    - What about the students that are doing well all year long and then fail the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests? The grades are there, conduct is good
    - The judgment call is taken away from teachers and it’s not fair when deciding whether or not a child is ready to be passed to the next grade
There is so much emphasis on the standardized testing to where it causes anxiety in students and all students do not test well
Return to the 3Rs...reading, writing, and arithmetic. Being able to communicate effectively and not use text—talk when completing a resume

Principals and Central Office Leaders Focus Group Meeting
April 3, 2013
9:00 a.m.

1. What are the greatest strengths of Bulloch County schools?
   - Technology-student, leadership
   - Community committed to education - Ogeechee Technical College, Georgia Southern University, East Georgia State College
   - Communication-relaying message from central office to staff - internal communication
   - Beautiful facilities
   - Strong educators who care about children – hard working, through change, Hi-Q
   - With local colleges – do not struggle to find Hi-Q teachers
   - Support/partnerships with business, colleges, community
   - Board of Education support of arts
   - No cuts in student learning days
   - Leaders support each other and share –use to be competitive, not collaborative

2. What are the greatest challenges of Bulloch County schools?
   - Lack of funding
   - Asking teachers and administrators to do more with less
   - Philosophy prekindergarten – college (PK – 20) has evolved with initiatives yet infrastructure of who is leading schools lag - need new infrastructure as if it was 20 years ago. Bureaucracy needs to support expectations
   - Need academic coaches in each building
   - Organizational structure is limiting – with positions in schools
   - Traditional approach/setting does not meet all student needs
   - May need to look at career programs, not just academic focus after graduation – expect same of all students – unrealistic – starting in middle school
   - Poverty increasing causing families/students who have emotional and behavioral problems and readiness skills
   - Fail to realize personnel inside schools is needed – slow to move to raise tax rate – no conversation about this (nine mills + one percent sales tax) – property owned by older people w/o students in system
   - ESPLOST does not help school personnel needs –goes to capital projects
   - Lack of understanding in community about how funds are split up – need to educate all
   - We have not exhausted all funding/organizational ideas within system. Protect small schools – decision in past – but we have not considered everything w/in system (consolidate schools, and unpopular ideas)
   - Need to open up to creative options for organizational structure – historically there’s opposition
   - Lack of understanding whole system
   - Lack of strong parent support/discipline/follow-through with children at home – hard to reach
   - Zoning – Georgia Southern University campus has new apartments. College students move into them, leaving old apartments, where poor families move
   - Administrators do not follow policy for attendance (request to move schools)
   - Big concern – inequity with zoning, school size, demographics, trends that need to be addressed yearly, turnover rate
   - Need a study of changes in community demographics and move with it
• Perception of division and differences between areas (Portal-Statesboro-South end)
• New initiatives, like career academy/charter school, need to be tied to all of this happen together
• Diversity within schools-has changed in Bulloch County population growth and we need to match/mirror/show respect to it

3. What do you want your schools to be like in the next 5-10 years?
   • No discipline problems
   • Teacher-led – figure out solutions and drive the excellence
   • Intrinsically motivated
   • Prepared for school prekindergarten and kindergarten
   • Supportive parents – can get in touch with when we need them
   • Higher achievers are pushed and lower level achievers are having needs met
   • Student-centered learning – meet all needs
   • Assessment model that measures growth
   • Infrastructure at central office that supports administrators when there are problems – help grow and learn
   • Parent registers and is happy to be there because all schools are worthy – perception to be positive for all schools
   • Eleventh and twelfth grade years – more transition activities: dual enrollment,...help stay in postsecondary by directing where they’ll be
   • Teachers and administrators collaborate as a school system – more trust and work together to divide work up
   • Business and industry values implemented at school – same struggles – teach the value of work and pride for later success too (without relying on others)
   • More social and emotional support for children who live with poor role models
   • Resources (Georgia Southern University, Averitt Center, Statesboro High School …) to be shared with elementary schools – go to performances at other schools too – local involvement (save money too)

4. Are students prepared for success in postsecondary institutions and/or careers when they graduate? If not, what would help them be more prepared?
   • No system in place to track this
   • In general, yes, but they are misinformed about what “success for them” is – what are the options, where do you fit?
   • Unrealistic expectations for their futures – need to know options
   • No, struggles with writing, communication, soft-skills (i.e., using professional and casual communication at wrong times), public speaking. We need to require these things early-middle school
   • Need students to have skills (technical) learned in the community. Exposure to these things – problems: transportation, parents to get them there to help with attitude and employable opportunities
   • No, too much focus on academic, not technical skills
   • No, written and oral skills are not effective. Teamwork, soft skills, language/vocabulary.
   • Churches need to jump on board to better prepare them. Parents do not teach this.
   • Leadership and faculty must expect this in order for it to start
   • Middle class students have parents who do too much for them. Need to be more independent with many things as they grow up. Parents are scared to let go. Need internal locus of control taught by parents, community, and school
   • Administrators must have buy-in to Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and hold teachers accountable for what is already planned
   • Monitoring instruction: Walk-throughs, observations
   • Role of principals must change from 1960s model of operations so we can be in classrooms more to monitor curriculum
• We accept fault for things (students’ failure) and need to take pride in what we do
• Business community feels like we are too easy on parents – see it with new employees.
  Too many chances given in school

5. Do you think students are being provided the technology skills they need for the future?
• Have skills, but not keyboarding ability.
• Can communicate with it (social networking)
• Need to educate students about what is appropriate about bringing phones etc. to school.
• Students know how to steal passwords etc. but need the appropriate skills.
• Concern about things being stolen – shift in thinking - need clear guidelines w/o fear of school replacing these things.

6. Do you use continuous improvement processes and tools in your work? Are they beneficial?
• Fragmented per school
• We do it, but it is based on what we already know how to do
• Limited knowledge about what we have been trained to do
• Some things we do not use long enough – band-wagon
• Have done ten different ways – this is the first time in 12 years that we have taken it and are all going through same process
• Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement training for future improvement planning
• No importance placed on this
• Depends on principal/leadership at the time
• We have done well considering lack of processing that we have had

7. Do teachers personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual needs of students?
• Some do – but not everyone
• Observations help us to see this and give feedback
• Teacher evaluation process and walk-throughs help us be more mindful of this
• With all technology, we need to figure out ways to be more efficient
• Focus on accountability – and giving teachers feedback is weak
• Really difficult to read lesson plans, observe teachers, give feedback…among all other responsibilities
• More pressing issues take priority over this often
• Need more peer-observations and collaboration to help with this
• Need professional learning (Professional Learning Communities), common assessments system for helping weak teachers and a system to focus on this
• Teachers are afraid to use common assessments because it could be used against them
• Need common assessments – use for self-reflection, collaboration, and root cause analysis

8. Are students treated with respect?
• Bullying misconception – that everything is bullying. Parents mistake conflict with bullying
• Electronic communication makes bullying worse
• Students believe bullying is a problem over time
• Difficult to explain to parents – even kindergarten students/parents report this
• Different perspective about bullying at the school level. Students do not have coping skills – conflict resolution. Counselors do not have “time” to address this
• Safe schools – yes. No-weapons can take out windows. We are as safe as can be expected. Lots of practices, but outside attacks are possible. Cannot fully protect ourselves from crazies
• Isolated unsafe incidents take place – we are doing job of keeping children safe
• Tastefully fencing in schools would help with this
• Schools have potential for danger with some disturbed students
• Cameras are in four schools – nobody watches
• No options for elementary children with problems

9. Anything else?
• Georgia Southern University - community communication is needed. Planning ahead for English Language Learner students would be quite helpful. Better communication about international students coming would help us to serve them better
• Better communication among directors in our system. Sometimes we find out information late
• Directors flounder around to see where they fit. Need central office communication among all
• Need feedback from students about the classes, learning, what they need, and strengths of teachers
• Parent involvement – need it from parents living in poverty. Need to tap into that population and get on board
• Porch visits to parents – reach out to pull them into schools and their children's lives.
• Calendarize the strategic planning stuff – workload and pace is maddening for principals. We have to take care of our processes
• Principals need more professional development about Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, data analysis etc.

Postsecondary Institutions Focus Group Meeting
April 18, 2013
2:00 p.m.

1. What are the greatest strengths of the Bulloch County schools?
• Great facilities
• Parents of students appreciate the concern administrators and teachers have for students.
• Been in five different schools and all seem genuinely concerned.
• Large group of teachers in Bulloch County schools who work closely with Georgia Southern University to prepare teachers. Multiple areas—not just Department of Education
• Georgia Southern University faculty members are invited to participate in things such as Career Day, etc.
• Willingness of the school system to collaborate on grants and enthusiastic about working together
• Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education pathways
• Increased willingness to look at multiple areas — which was not there a short time ago
• Engage in investigation of educational problems
• Mathematics instruction — former students teaching current high school students
• No difference in private/public students

2. What are the greatest challenges of the Bulloch County schools?
• Funding
• Lack of resources affects Advanced Placement course offerings
• Courses that lead to successful employment
• World is shrinking — yet we offer only Spanish — limited foreign languages
• Professional learning experiences for teachers and administrators
• Six weeks left in term and teachers are done with instruction
• Content delivery only — does not include skills
• Teach Advanced Placement courses in fall, but does not give Advanced Placement examinations until spring
• Constant mandates — before “solid” implementation
• Lack of diversity in faculty that represents student population
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Bulloch County Schools

3. What do you want the Bulloch County schools to be like in the next five years, ten years?
   • Natural transition from high school to postsecondary — no time spent on rigor of courses/teaching style
   • No one size-fits-all
   • Find pathways to attract “high-tech” companies
   • Technology available to allow data-driven decisions
   • Increase in reading-writing/information literacy skills
   • Apply knowledge learned
   • Bilingual schools
   • Music/foreign language from kindergarten — increase mathematics and reading skills
   • Common vision for the county — all schools meet the standards — no separate kingdoms
   • Bulloch students be “desired” candidates being admitted to Georgia Southern University
   • Advisement to help students find their way — no more leaving it to do on their own
   • Opportunities/time for unstructured learning. Ex. Lathe machine — dog tags
   • Learning for a purpose — mathematics will help to solve “x”
   • Reading for a “reward” but not intrinsic
   • Everyone is slated for college — system must change to meet the different levels of learning — advice based on interest and abilities

4. What specific skills do students need when they get to postsecondary institutes?
   • Expectation of time required to be successful
   • Writing
   • Persistence/determination
   • Critical thinking; conceptual based learning
   • Correct operatives for mathematics/problem-solving

5. Do you feel that students are being provided the technology skills they need for the future?
   • Dbase-query (teachers need to know and we'll get the trickle-down effect)
   • Use iPhone/iPad for work

6. What is your involvement in the Bulloch County schools? Are there other opportunities for partnerships that would benefit you and the Bulloch County schools? If so, what are they?
   • Theatre/television station
   • Music/arts outreach – writing project
   • Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) newsletter
   • Planetarium
   • Admin/teachers serve on advisory boards
   • Collaboratives for grant opportunities
   • Preparing “new” teachers—labs/student-teacher experience; research projects where postsecondary provides service to public schools
   • Participation in foreign language workshops
   • Scholars leave — create system where “scholars” want to teach in
   • Service projects for community

7. Other opportunities for partnerships?
   • Students mentoring/teaching public school students
   • Improved communications between the education systems to allow for discovery
   • Use human resources for language and other electives where Bulloch County schools have limited funding
   • Learn together what benefits the community
   • Human capital — serve on each other’s projects/advisory boards

8. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?
   • Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Café
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Bulloch County Schools

- Ogeechee Technical College tours
- Parental involvement
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Accreditation (SACS)– increased opportunities between Ogeechee Technical College and Georgia Southern University
EDUCATION SUMMIT

On April 18, 2013, the Bulloch County School System conducted its first ever Education Summit, with 214 educators and other community leaders attending. Childcare was provided for 52 children. After hearing the President of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education’s *Economics of Education* presentation, the Bulloch County School Superintendent discussed the initiatives of the school system.

The participants were divided into eleven breakout sessions, each led by Bulloch County school personnel. Each group was given the same questions. The questions and responses follow.

1. What are the greatest strengths of Bulloch County schools?
   - Great communication, teachers, and administrators
   - Tremendous resources in community that support education
   - Economic link with Georgia Southern University
   - Access to technology
   - Several new schools, facilities
   - Strong educational culture that values education
   - Strong support for the arts in the community
   - The extracurricular activities available to students
   - Hosting functions and inviting the community to provide input. Being at a place where we want to help our community and students
   - Learning what we do
   - New leadership. Requesting input is new. Community input was lost and this is a step in the right direction in the system of educating students
   - The superintendent and board members visited concerned clergy without hesitation when invited. Willingness to hear concerns. People are serious in regards to education. Comes from the top
   - Leadership strengths
   - Open dialogue
   - Hope to continue with process so that ideas will be implemented. The superintendent is ready to move toward improvement.
   - Accessibility of school personnel, open door policies throughout Bulloch County schools.
   - New facilities for elementary schools are outstanding
   - Good access to technology in all schools
   - Parent portal
   - Facilities
   - Community schools
   - Communication
   - Dedication and education of teachers
   - Partnerships w/higher learning
   - Teacher/parent relationships in elementary schools
   - Access to technology
   - Student/teacher relationships
   - Attendance
   - Faculty and engaged teachers, highly qualified
   - Facilities
   - Community at large
   - Technology
Variety of pathways – can enroll at Georgia Southern University or Ogeechee Technical College
Quality of teachers
Facilities
Technology
Communication
Care for students
After-school opportunities
Elementary schools do a good job of parent involvement
Having Georgia Southern University available
Open line of communication between teachers and parents
Communication in schools to parents
Willingness to change
Willingness of new superintendent wanting input from everyone, accommodate even on personal level
Finances compared to other districts
Facilitates in district

2. What skills/knowledge do you believe students need in order to be prepared for life after graduation? How do you think we should identify potential career pathways for our high school graduates? (A Career Pathway is a structure for organizing and providing quality programs that help students navigate their way to greater success in college and careers.)
- Students need to know how to think critically on their own
- Students need to think outside the box
- Not be afraid to fail. Not be afraid to make decisions
- Know how to weigh their decisions
- K-12 mentoring programs that help students deal with life decisions, careers, etc.
- Students need to know how to write, how to type……not in text lingo
- Taught responsibility
- Give them room to grow….to be able to stand on their own
- Do not over protect them
- Teach them that they have to earn things….it is not just an entitlement
- They need to learn to cope with failure and success
- Aligning curriculum to prepare students for the industries in the community
- Coordinating with Ogeechee Technical College and Georgia Southern University and building partnerships within the community to assist with developing curriculum for students
- Help them to understand what it takes to be successful in a career path for their life.
- Expose students earlier to career interests
- Create diversity among the curriculum and the program offerings
- Help students to be realistic about their strengths and what criteria are needed for their career interests
- Meeting with counselors to discuss strengths and career pathways
- Explaining career pathways at a young age. Look at options and offer choices
- Discussing openly that students are not all college bound and assisting them in finding how they can be of service
- Prep for what students may want to do as a career prior to high school
- Vocational training needed. Should not be taken away for all academic classes
- Importance of all students and what they can do after high school
- Time management. Prioritizing important tasks
- Applying information and knowledge
• Bridge between middle school and high school for pathways
• Critical thinking
• Vocabulary
• Comfort in taking risks
• Technology and engineering skills
• Keyboarding. Crucial as stated by college student guests
• Resources to be able to find out what you need to do, how to get around
• Basic computer skills
• Problem-solving
• Critical thinking
• Soft skills
   Attitude
   Work ethic
   Proper dress
• Non-complacency
• Accessing information
• Transfer academic skills to real life (count money, writing)
• Lifelong learners
• Student expect themselves to go to college
• All of us can succeed
• Learning w/purpose not just for tests
• Anger management
• Budget and financial responsibility
• Writing skills
• Confidence
• How to start businesses or run businesses
• Global thinking
• Allow students to pick career paths and take classes in that area
• Change according to student needs
• Middle and elementary students have to be introduced to career paths
• Students need to experience work programs
• Non-degree college (do not require students to pick a major)
• Job shadowing
• Pathways developed with partnership with business and schools
• Basic literacy/mathematics skills
• Good communication skills
• Technology savvy
• Learn how to learn – how to be good students
• Critical thinking/problem-solving
• Workplace skills-work ethic, people skills
• Standard English verbal skills – formal versus informal communication
• Morals
• Find out what jobs are available in our local area so that they are trained to meet local needs
• Student wants/needs
• Hands-on learning opportunities
• Career exposure
• Have university personnel come in to broaden their knowledge and familiarize them with opportunities that are available
• Job shadowing and apprenticeships
• Reading, writing and mathematics
• Introduction to technology
• Relate curriculum to real life
• Basic life skills
• Nutrition and fitness education and relate it to their health
• Arts as an alternative to sports
• Need to have knowledge and encouragement and resources that they can access because abstinence is not working
• Inform them of community resources that are available
• Background in government and civics and how to be an active citizen and be involved in issues
• Children are maturing physically faster now
• Ninth graders – should they be around tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders?
  ❖ Divide grade levels better
  ❖ Buses – all students together is not a good idea
• Financial awareness/education
  ❖ Cost of not paying bills – credit scores
  ❖ Balancing check books
  ❖ Raising a family
• Understanding of finances of a family/individual and how it all works
• Sex education much earlier than high school
  ❖ It’s so much more different than it used to be
  ❖ Not enough after-school activities to keep students busy and out of trouble
• Do an Interest Inventory earlier than high school and help students understand the dollar figure that the career can bring in because some students are not motivated by anything else
  ❖ Open communication and involve parents so the parent can help guide student with choices and inform them of career guidelines
• Find out what employers need our students to know and build the students the employers need
• Make high schools more like a technical school
• General skill workers will always be needed
  ❖ Plumbers
  ❖ Electricians
  ❖ Brick Masons
  ❖ Carpenters
  ❖ Secretaries
• Look at the businesses in this area and encourage students to develop skills that would help them get a job in a business that is already established in this area
  ❖ Field trips to area plants
  ❖ Bring employers into school to talk to students about the type of employee they are looking for
• Students need to realize that they need to be able to discover new things on their own, that just because they start one career that it does not mean they might not need to change later on…in other words they need a plan B
• One concern was if students choose a career pathway, would they still get classes to make them college ready?
• Do Interest Inventory in middle school
• In fifth grade, had to do something like that to meet state standard
• A lot more availability of classes for students at Statesboro High School than at Portal High School
  ◆ County used to have a co-op between schools and would bus students to other schools for classes they could not get at their home school
• Soft skills (work ethic, punctuality) to be successful in work force
• Think critically
• Competence
• Reading (academic areas)
• Students with disabilities, how do we prepare them for life after school, if they do not have services find resources?
• Real life skills (how to balance checkbook)
• Provide a pathway so that they may know what they want to do after high school (guide them)/ Plans
• College fairs, provide information of what they offer
• Students with disabilities, how to perform life skills, then go out and try to learn how to work in the real world (plan to meet every child’s needs) early on
• Vocational school in middle school, pipeline/ do not give them option to drop out. But can change directions

3. How can parents and community members be more involved in the schools?
• There can always be improvement in communication…especially in the upper grades
• Try to get parents more involved at the higher grade levels
• Make parents feel welcome to the schools
• Seek participation from the parents in the upper grades not only looking for the monetary contributions to the boosters’ club
• Parents need to be more involved in checking with their child…be sure they are prepared for school
• Parents need to hold their children more accountable/responsible for success in school
• Make parents welcome to get involved at their child’s school
• Tell parents what you need from them (make copies, assist with class projects, fieldtrips, act as hostesses for events)
• Parents need to ask
• Parents need to be informed
• Easier ways to communicate
• Take programs to the community
• Service learning projects
• Bridge gaps between socio-economic groups
• Ask the business community
• Parent portal as an automatic when your student is enrolled
• Present things in a variety of ways – all parents may not understand the lingo of education
• Programs offered to parents (parenting classes, discipline, technology classes)
• Incentives for parents – tie-in to student needs
• Food, fellowship, fun
• Encourage parents to get grandparents involved if the parent cannot come to events at school
• System/schools call employers to encourage them to allow their employees who have children in school the opportunity to be more involved in their child’s education
• Have counselors be on hand to help with career pathways and choices
• Introduce students in middle school to different types of careers
- Parents do not come when they should... “like for something like this process tonight...they come to school only when their child gets in trouble”
- Start with programs like this, the summit/ communications/ all the ways others were trying to make contact to get them here
- Schools go out and bring information to community/ some had bad experiences but still feel bad
- Parents get involved in classroom and help on behavior (some just need to be asked)
- Parent educational seminars are not at good times - different opinions (not always on Saturdays)
- Release times for conferences were great

4. What is your vision for Bulloch County schools in the next five to ten years? What would you like to see happening in Bulloch County schools in the next five to ten years?
- Seeing students driven and excited about moving up in school/education.
- Goals that can motivate them
- Reward system
- Require students to be involved in extracurricular activities...it holds them more accountable and ties them to one more mentor in their life
- Require students to participate in community service
- Have some form of looping...administrator that follows a child from the early grades to high school
- To see the system recruit more diverse/minorities in the teaching and administration of the school system
- See the system have an Art Magnet program in the community
- A program that educates the parents of the importance of education in their child’s life
- Better student behavior
- Safety is an issue
- Langston Chapel Middle School – teachers cannot teach because of discipline problems, better controlled schools and buses
- More incentives for students who are advanced in elementary schools – QUEST is not sufficient, move them to an appropriate grade level (differentiation)
- Students graduating in three years instead of four (some students are ready to move on)
- Magnet school
- Another alternative school – students should not have to have behavior problems to have access to alternative education
- Increased community involvement
- Transparency in school system decision–making, from curriculum to personnel decisions
- Foreign language before high school – research shows that it should be taught when children are younger
- Why do students have to do Criterion Referenced Competency Tests? To give teachers measurement of student knowledge so they can adjust teaching strategies
- Do away with the graduation test
- That is gone except for the writing test
- With the growing number of minority students the county needs to increase the number of minority teachers
- Teachers, minority teachers especially, need to encourage minority students to be teachers when they see there is a particular subject that they are good at and know they would excel in the field
- Students be more ready to go into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics careers
• Increase the number of advanced placement classes at Southeast Bulloch and Portal high schools
• In life you learn from your mistakes
• Schools experiment with new ways of teaching (reference made to Robert Kiyokaki and his philosophy)
• Flipping – homework in school so teachers can help and teaching going on at home – this would help parents learn
• Flipped classrooms are a hot topic right now. In case it is a new term for you, here is a brief description. A flipped classroom flips, or reverses, traditional teaching methods. Traditionally, the teacher talks about a topic at school and assigns homework that reinforces that day’s material. In a flipped classroom, the instruction is delivered online, outside of class. Video lectures may be online or may be provided on a DVD or a thumb drive. Some flipped models include communicating with classmates and the teacher via online discussions. The recorded lecture can be paused, rewound, re-watched, and forwarded through as needed. Then, class time is spent doing what ordinarily may have been assigned as homework. Class time may also be spent doing exercises, projects, discussions, or other interactive activities that illustrate the concept
• Survey students to see how many actually have computers/access to computers at home
• Develop stronger partnerships with businesses and find out their opportunity for growth
• Schools utilizing our resources at Ogeechee Technical College and Georgia Southern University
• More parent teacher conferences and inform/encourage parents that everything starts at home…discipline, etc.
• Schools have more parent involvement nights to learn what parents need and provide daycare…that was a big help tonight
• Use programs and survey monkey and provide place where people can anonymously give their input because some people feel intimidated in large groups
• Less dropouts, increase graduation rate (chase them down to get them back with all possible resources)
• Interagency support, whole community involved
• More after-school programs, volunteers (maybe a small salary) to help students. Work on mentoring, continuous programs
• More magnet schools, arts-science and mathematics
• More dual language in all schools
• Focus on prekindergarten programs, reading on level and ahead (struggling areas)
• Reconsider bringing back old home economics classes, jobs are available today in these areas
• Can we focus on students early on, can we see drop outs in second grade and begin interventions with them?
• Increase number of minority teachers in classroom
• Increase salaries of teacher, better teacher-better instruction
• Find out what students interest areas are in early grades. Some type of assessment
• Technology is strength (equipment wise). How do we allow students to use it and use it correctly? How do we enhance teachers abilities to use it?
• Too much technology, not enough writing without spell check/grammar check
• Every child provided a computer to take home
• Move readily with changes – do not continue stuck in our ways
• Evolve and accept change
• Provide value for students and community
• Lower dropout rate
• Expand Work Based Learning program

5. What challenges do Bulloch County schools face in achieving our vision? What barriers can prevent us from achieving our mission?
• Not enough support in elementary classes (paraprofessionals, etc.)
• Not enough money to meet our needs
• Teacher and parent willingness to change
• Challenge of motivating students to want to succeed
• Meeting the needs of all groups
• Business “buy in”
• Money
• Young parents
• Lack of mentor/parent involvement
• Parent involvement
• More after-school resources
• Quality teachers in specific areas
  ▪ Finding qualified Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics teachers and student motivation and accountability
• Sustainability
• Economics
• Non-educated parents
• Children raising children
• Lack of early intervention
• Parent accountability
• Entitlement…education is a privilege…not an entitlement
• Developing strategic partnerships
• School culture
• Increase in minority teachers
• Schools of Excellence
• Increase graduation rates
• More equality with special education students as well as gifted students
• More sports facilities (on campus facilities)
• Career Academy for high school students

After the breakout sessions, those attending the summit reconvened to present the issue(s) they identified as the greatest challenge:
• Understanding and implementing strategies of a very diverse population to meet their needs
• More consistent discipline across home and school and lack of parent involvement
• Student motivation and accountability and finding qualified Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) teachers
• The constantly changing curriculum
• Creating strategic partnership that will develop college and career pathways, mentorships, job shadowing, and overall academic support
• Funding and parent and community involvement in the schools
• Large class sizes
COMMUNITY PERCEPTION SURVEY

In order to determine the perceptions and opinions of the Bulloch County community, the Bulloch County School System designed and administered a community perception survey. From April 12, 2013 to May 6, 2013, 259 responses were submitted, almost all responded to each of the 18 items:

1. What are the greatest strengths of the Bulloch County schools?
2. What are the greatest challenges of the Bulloch County schools?
3. What factors do you believe are barriers to student success?
4. How can parents support the mission of Bulloch County schools?
5. How can the community support the mission of Bulloch County schools?
6. How can Bulloch County schools better support the community?
7. What do you want Bulloch County schools to be like in the next five to ten years?
8. How important are the following in accomplishing the mission of the Bulloch County schools? (4) Very Important, (3) Moderately Important, (2) Slightly Important, (1) Not Important at All
9. Who is primarily responsible for ensuring student success? (Please place in rank order with 1 being the greatest responsibility and 4 being the lowest responsibility.)
10. Do you have enough information regarding the implementation of Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) in Georgia and in Bulloch County schools?
11. Please select the appropriate response to indicate your perception regarding the following statements. (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, (1) Strongly Disagree
12. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?
13. Stakeholder group
14. School(s) my child attends: (check all that apply)
15. My child receives the following services: (check all that apply)
16. My child participates in extracurricular activities
17. Gender
18. Race/Ethnicity
Community Perception Survey Results

Table III indicates demographic and other information about the responders to the survey (Items numbered 13 – 18 and 10).

### Table III: Demographic and Other Information About Survey Responders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number Responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Stakeholder group:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch County Schools Employee</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Race/Ethnicity:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Gender:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. School(s) my child attends (check all that apply): [Listing 10% and Above]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia P. Bryant Elementary School</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statesboro High School</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William James Middle School</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. My child receives the following services: (check all that apply)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. My child participates in extracurricular activities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you have enough information regarding the implementation of Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) in Georgia and in Bulloch County Schools?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequately Informed</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need More Information</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix D lists the Community Perception Survey - individual responses to the open-ended items numbered 1 – 7 and 12.
Table IV indicates for item #8 the relative importance of the item to the accomplishment of the mission of the Bulloch County schools. Table V indicates the five most important items and the five least importance items in item #8. (In some cases, six items are listed due to a tie for #5._

### Table IV: Survey Item #8 and Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reconfiguring school zones (attendance/transportation)?</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconfiguring school schedules?</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconfiguring school grade levels?</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing rigor to prepare our students for college and careers?</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating magnet schools?</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning our career pathways with programs offered at nearby postsecondary institutions (e.g. Ogeechee Technical College, Georgia Southern University, East Georgia State College)?</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning our career pathways with local and regional industry opportunities (e.g. GulfStream, Georgia Ports Authority, Walmart Distribution, Viracon, Briggs &amp; Stratton)?</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) opportunities?</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizing innovative learning practices?</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing early learning opportunities?</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using technology tools effectively?</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing fine arts opportunities (performing &amp; visual)?</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring equitable access for all schools (e.g. Advanced Placement courses)?</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing highly effective and diverse teaching staff?</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing academic enrichment opportunities?</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table V: Survey Item #8 With the Most and Least Important Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing highly effective and diverse teaching staff?</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing academic enrichment opportunities?</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring equitable access for all schools (e.g. Advanced Placement courses)?</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizing innovative learning practices?</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing rigor to prepare our students for college and careers?</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing early learning opportunities?</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least Important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing fine arts opportunities (performing &amp; visual)?</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconfiguring school zones (attendance/transportation)?</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconfiguring school schedules?</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating magnet schools?</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconfiguring school grade levels?</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table VI indicates for item #11 the relative agreement with the statements listed. Table VII indicates the five items with the strongest agreement and the five items with the weakest agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11. Please select the appropriate response to indicate your perception regarding the following statements.</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, (1) Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch County citizens are proud of their schools.</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that we fully implement the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS).</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our students are prepared for success in postsecondary institutions and/or careers when they graduate from Bulloch County schools.</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents feel welcome in our schools.</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bulloch County School System communicates effectively with citizens and the community.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities exist for parents to participate in training and informational sessions to enhance student performance.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology in the schools is up-to-date and adequate.</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and community partnerships exist to provide a network of support for our students.</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch County teachers are qualified to teach in their area of responsibility.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and administrators have high expectations regarding all students learning to their full potential.</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch County schools provide learning experiences that meet the learning, growth, and development needs of our students.</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators and teachers create an environment that helps children learn.</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch County is doing enough to support teachers as they implement Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety for all students is a high priority in the schools.</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are adequately informed of their child’s learning progress.</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student behavior in Bulloch County schools disrupts the learning process.</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying is handled appropriately in the schools.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and administrators are treated with respect.</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch County School System is fiscally responsible.</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are treated with respect by teachers and administrators.</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that we implement health and nutrition guidelines in the schools to reduce the risk for childhood obesity and to improve student learning.</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human, technological, and material resources are effectively selected and used to ensure the academic success of all learners.</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch County teachers are effective in helping students learn to their full potential.</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators of our schools are effective.</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bulloch County School System has a variety of programs available for family involvement.</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline in the schools is administered fairly and appropriately.</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology is effectively used to maximize student learning.</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A safe learning environment is planned and implemented by our school staff and administrators.</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our school facilities are adequately maintained, clean, and conducive for teaching and learning.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient resources are allocated to support student learning.</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools/teachers use technology effectively in the classroom.</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community resources and partnerships are effectively used to ensure opportunities for success of all students.</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bulloch County School System meets our students’ health and nutritional needs.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate plans are in place to support transitions between grade levels and schools.</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for communication exist in both directions between the home and school.</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students have adequate opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities.</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation provided by Bulloch County School System is safe and reliable.</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bulloch County Board of Education operates responsibly and effectively.</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table VII: Survey Item #11 With the Strongest and Weakest Agreement Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongest Agreement</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our school facilities are adequately maintained, clean, and conducive for teaching and learning.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch County teachers are qualified to teach in their area of responsibility.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A safe learning environment is planned and implemented by our school staff and administrators.</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation provided by Bulloch County School System is safe and reliable.</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety for all students is a high priority in the schools.</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongest Disagreement</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our students are prepared for success in postsecondary institutions and/or careers when they graduate from Bulloch County schools.</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bulloch County School System meets our students’ health and nutritional needs.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying is handled appropriately in the schools.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline in the schools is administered fairly and appropriately.</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch County is doing enough to support teachers as they implement Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VIII indicates the responses to item #9 regarding the primary responsibility for ensuring student success.

Table VIII: Survey Item #9 and Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Who is primarily responsible for ensuring student success? Greatest responsibility (1) and lowest responsibility. (4)</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer Options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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FINDINGS

Based on the results of the surveys, interviews, data collected and analyzed, focus group meetings, and the Education Summit, the following are the findings of the Bulloch County Community Engagement Initiative. The issues, strengths, and challenges identified are discussed.

Issues

The Community Engagement Advisory Committee determined early-on in the process the most important issues for the school system to include in the Community Engagement Initiative. The Advisory Committee based the planning of the community survey, interviews, data analyses, focus group meetings, and the Education Summit on these prioritized issues:

1. College and Career Readiness
2. Highly Effective and Diverse Teaching Workforce
3. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Rigor
4. Partnership and Community Engagement
5. Funding
6. Students Needs
7. School Safety and Discipline
8. Barriers to Graduation

Strengths

Overwhelmingly, the leadership of the Bulloch County School System was indicated to be its greatest strength. The Bulloch County Board of Education functions in a cohesive, supportive manner. The Board and Superintendent are viewed as moving in the right direction, trying to get the school system back on track after several years of a lack of focus. The large majority indicated that the involvement of the community in the Community Engagement Initiative was a welcomed first step in re-building trust in the school system. The strategic planning process was viewed as a positive next step toward increasing the effectiveness of the school system.

Bulloch County school facilities were rated as among the best in the state. The ESPLOST was instrumental in renovating the schools and campuses of the school system. It is obvious that the community views the facilities with pride.

The majority of those participating in the Community Engagement Initiative indicated that, overall, the school system has expert, dedicated leaders, teachers, and other staff members. Many expressed pride that all teachers are rated as “highly qualified.”

Most individuals indicated that Bulloch County is uniquely situated due to the following:

- Three highly effective postsecondary institutions
- A strong Chamber of Commerce
- Numerous successful large and small businesses and industries
- The geographic positioning of the community in close proximity to Savannah with the expansion of Savannah’s port and the nearby I-16

Students and staff feel safe at school. The only safety issue identified was student discipline which is discussed under the heading “Challenges” below.

These strengths, certainly, may be used to address the challenges found.
Challenges

Creating new and strengthening current partnerships among the community, postsecondary institutions, and the business and industries of the community was a theme that emerged the most when discussing school system challenges. There have been a few positive instances of the school system collaborating with other entities, but, overwhelmingly, those participating in the process saw great potential for many effective partnerships benefiting all segments of the community.

The lack of funding for the Bulloch County schools was addressed in numerous ways. Most indicated that the school system had managed its resources very well, but the continual cuts in funding are significantly influencing the quality of education for the students. Large class sizes were noted by many as one negative impact of diminishing resources. Many encouraged the school system to seek creative solutions to the funding issue by creating partnerships with postsecondary institutions and other entities in the community to leverage resources to benefit all.

Numerous opportunities for partnerships exist, and it is obvious that there is a willingness and desire among leaders in the community and postsecondary institutions, as well as leaders in the Bulloch County School System to create effective partnership that will benefit the students and schools of Bulloch County and the community at large.

Preparing students for postsecondary study and careers is a challenge mentioned numerous times. Many focus groups mentioned the need for students to develop “soft” skills such as effective oral and written communication, strong work ethic, punctuality, and working in teams. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills were identified as lacking in many graduates. Strengthening career pathways and increasing course rigor were important to many. In fact, several parents and students indicated a desire for increased rigor.

Mentioned by teachers, students, parents, and others was the inequity among opportunities provided by the schools. Cited mostly was the lack of uniformity in Advanced Placement offerings at the high schools. Attendance zoning was noted by some as the root cause of the inequity.

Parent involvement in the schools and their active participation in the education of their students were mentioned as both strengths and weaknesses. The parents who are involved are valued and appreciated, and they actively support their children and the schools. However, many students would benefit significantly if their parents were more concerned about their education. An associated issue is the communication between the school and parents. Many indicated that the level and effectiveness of the communication were inconsistent across schools.

There appears to be an absence of a culture of continuous improvement. When asked of teachers, leaders, and other school employees about continuous improvement processes and tools, many did not understand the concept, even when given examples. Some indicated that when they did participate in such activities, it was perfunctory and unproductive. The use of data to make decisions seemed inconsistent across schools.

The inconsistency of discipline across schools is a major challenge, and many feel that discipline is applied unfairly to students within a school and across schools. Disruptive students are viewed as taking time away from effective instruction. The views of the issue of bullying varied. Students and parents indicated that bullying is a concern. Yet, administrators indicated that it is not frequent and that parents and students define bullying too broadly.
Although most indicated that the staff is effective, many indicated that there are a few ineffective teachers and school leaders. Many indicated the need for a diverse workforce that mirrored the diversity of the student population of the school, while not diminishing the pursuit of effectiveness.

Overall, the central finding of the Community Engagement Initiative is that the Bulloch County School System is good, yet there are many opportunities for improvement that can be addressed through the strategic planning process. It is clear that the Bulloch County community has high expectations for its school system.
PRIORITIZED ISSUES, STRENGTHS, AND CHALLENGES OF THE BULLOCH COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Preliminarily, the Advisory Committee identified and prioritized issues to be addressed in the Community Engagement Initiative (see page 6 of this report). The prioritized issues are:

1. College and Career Readiness
2. Highly Effective and Diverse Teaching Workforce
3. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Rigor
4. Partnership and Community Engagement
5. Funding
6. Students Needs
7. School Safety and Discipline
8. Barriers to Graduation

These issues were incorporated into each aspect of the Community Engagement Initiative.

In order to send a finalized and prioritized list of strengths and challenges for consideration by the school system in the strategic planning process, the Community Engagement Advisory Committee considered the prioritized issues (above) and reviewed all the data collected from focus group discussions, individual interviews, the community survey, and the Education Summit. They confirmed the findings of the Community Engagement Initiative (see page 52 of this report). After much discussion and using a process to prioritize items, the Advisory Committee identified and ranked the strengths of and challenges for the Bulloch County School System.

The prioritized strengths are:

1. Highly Effective and Efficient Leadership
2. Expert, Dedicated Educators
3. Highly Effective Postsecondary Institutions
4. Cohesive and Supportive Board of Education
5. School Facilities
6. Strong Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Authority
7. Numerous Successful Small and Large Businesses and Industries
8. Geographic Positioning of Bulloch County
9. School Safety

The Advisory Committee prioritized the challenges as:

1. Preparing Students for Postsecondary Study and Careers
2. Increasing Parental Support and Involvement
3. Addressing Funding Issues
4. Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement
5. Eliminating Inequity of Opportunities from School to School
6. Creating New, and Strengthening Current, Partnerships
7. Ensuring Discipline Fairness and Consistency
8. Developing a Highly Effective and Diverse Workforce

After significant input from numerous Bulloch County stakeholders, in May 2013, the issues, strengths, and challenges identified and prioritized in the Community Engagement Initiative were forwarded to the Superintendent and the Board of Education of the Bulloch County School System for consideration in the strategic planning process.
SUMMARY

In February 2013, the Bulloch County School System embarked on an extensive Community Engagement Initiative as a first step to determine the educational goals and aspirations of the Bulloch County community. A Community Engagement Advisory Committee was appointed to provide council and guidance to the process and was given a goal and tasks.

Goal

The Community Engagement Advisory Committee was charged with the goal: Engage a broad coalition of the Bulloch County community in meaningful dialog regarding the education of the children and youth of the community that will result in

- Pertinent information for the strategic planning process
- Identification of community needs and aspirations for the school system
- Extensive community input to be used in the strategic planning process
- Community awareness of education issues
- A strong community base that supports school improvement efforts

Tasks

The tasks identified for the Advisory Committee were:

- Analyze Data
- Determine Additional Data Needed
- Plan Education Summit
- Participate in Education Summit
- Analyze Additional Data
- Identify and Prioritize Education Issues, Strengths, and Challenges for the Strategic Planning Process
- Report to the Superintendent and Board of Education

During, the Community Engagement Initiative, more than 700 individuals participated in at least one of the following:

- Community Engagement Advisory Committee
- Community Perception Survey
- One-on-One Interviews with Education and Community Leaders
- Focus Group Meetings of Parents, Students, Business and Industry Leaders, Chamber of Commerce Members, Leaders of Postsecondary Institutions, Leaders in Business and Industry, and School System Personnel
- The Education Summit

Prioritized Issues, Strengths, and Challenges

The issues identified and prioritized by the Advisory Committee are:

1. College and Career Readiness
2. Highly Effective and Diverse Teaching Workforce
3. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Rigor
4. Partnership and Community Engagement
5. Funding
6. Students Needs
7. School Safety and Discipline
8. Barriers to Graduation
The prioritized issues were incorporated into all aspects of the Community Engagement Initiative including the focus group discussions, interviews, community perception survey, and Education Summit. Based on these and other data collected, the members of the Advisory Committee identified and prioritized strengths of the Bulloch County School System that can be used in the strategic planning process to address the challenges of the school system. The strengths in priority order are:

1. Highly Effective and Efficient Leadership
2. Expert, Dedicated Educators
3. Highly Effective Postsecondary Institutions
4. Cohesive and Supportive Board of Education
5. School Facilities
6. Strong Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Authority
7. Numerous Successful Small and Large Businesses and Industries
8. Geographic Positioning of Bulloch County
9. School Safety

Based on all the data collected in each component of the Community Engagement Initiative, the Advisory Committee identified and prioritized the challenges for the Bulloch County School Systems as:

1. Preparing Students for Postsecondary Study and Careers
2. Increasing Parental Support and Involvement
3. Addressing Funding Issues
4. Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement
5. Eliminating Inequity of Opportunities from School to School
6. Creating New, and Strengthening Current, Partnerships
7. Ensuring Discipline Fairness and Consistency
8. Developing a Highly Effective and Diverse Workforce

In conclusion, with extensive input from all sectors of the Bulloch County community, the school system can enter into the strategic planning process with confidence that the resulting multi-year plan should be based on the issues, strengths, and challenges identified through the Community Engagement Initiative.