

September 9, 2008

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. John Jackson, Superintendent of Schools  
Jefferson City Schools  
575 Washington Street  
Jefferson, Georgia 30549

Dear Dr. Jackson:

In 2006, Jefferson City Schools was one of the first school systems in the nation awarded District Accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI). Since that time over 600 school systems in the country have initiated the District Accreditation process with 250 having been awarded this distinction. The District Accreditation recognition is for a 5-year term that provides accreditation for the school system, its schools, and programs.

Upon successful completion of the District Accreditation process, the system was charged with the responsibility of entering the implementation phase of the process. The implementation phase of the District Accreditation process required that the school system:

- Review and communicate the findings and observations contained in the Quality Assurance Report submitted to the school system after the on-site evaluation;
- Initiate steps to address the recommendations in the report;
- Continue to monitor accreditation requirements for the system and its schools;
- Monitor the execution and impact of strategies for improvement; and
- Continue to engage methods that provide for quality assurance.

The Quality Assurance Review Team made the following recommendations upon completion of its on-site evaluation:

1. Build upon current strategies to help parents assist their children by increasing parent education and by investigating additional curriculum and administrative support
2. Include student "traffic flow" within the building and address all security issues in the school safety plan
3. Expand professional learning by developing ways to assimilate new staff in the culture of the school and by adjusting the schedule to allow for additional instructional time for staff and students
4. Investigate grant opportunities, increase alumni interests, and communicate specific requests to the community to expand the financial base of the school system

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North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI)  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI)  
National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE)

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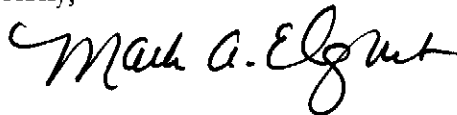
In order to maintain the accreditation term, the school system must now file a required Two-Year Progress Report focused on providing SACS CASI an executive update regarding the school system's actions to date in responding to the recommendations of the Quality Assurance Review. In review of each recommendation, the school system is asked to summarize its actions to date related to the recommendation. In addition to the summary, the school system is asked to classify the current status of each recommendation in one of three categories:

1. **Completed**...all necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The school system has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the recommendation.
2. **In Progress**...the school system is currently engaged in actions and processes but have yet to fully implement steps necessary to address the recommendation.
3. **No Action**...the school system has not taken any action for one or more of the following reasons: a) it lacks the resources necessary to address the recommendation; b) it professionally rejects the recommendation because it has no basis for improving the school system (the summary statement must provide substantive evidence to support this claim); or c) it fully intends to address the recommendation but has yet to initiate action.

It is the responsibility of the school system to address (except recommendations that are rejected with cause as noted above) each of the recommendations within the 5-year term accreditation.

The Two-Year Progress Report is due by December 1, 2008. You may submit the report electronically, [melgart@advanc-ed.org](mailto:melgart@advanc-ed.org), or by mail to our headquarters at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033. Please contact me if you have any questions or need assistance.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Elgart, Ed.D., President/CEO  
AdvancED

cc. Mike Bryans, Director – GA Council on Accreditation and School Improvement

**Jefferson City Schools**  
Public School Standards for SACS CASI  
Fall 2006

**STANDARD 1 Beliefs and Mission**

The school communicates a vision, statement of beliefs, and mission that provide a focus for improving the performance of both the students and the school.

**DISTRICT SUMMARY**

Jefferson City Schools (JCS) organized a district-level SACS Steering Committee in the Fall of 2005. The committee consisted of two representatives from each of the schools, the Associate Superintendent, the Director of Special Education, and the district Director of Middle and Secondary Instruction. Because the SACS Steering Committee wished to honor the rich history and tradition of Jefferson City Schools, committee members researched the goals and beliefs of the past decades. From this, the previous Board-approved mission statement and a favorite motto, "Exposure to Excellence Promotes Excellence," were adopted for use in each school. To individualize the mission statement for each school, a committee of faculty members at each school level interpreted the mission statement and created action-oriented commitment statements. The commitments were previewed by all staff, school council members, parent organizations (PTO, PATS), students, and by the general community through e-mail, scheduled meetings, and the website. The faculty, staff, and stakeholders revised, agreed upon, and therefore, adopted the commitment statements for their respective schools. The district-wide mission and commitment statements became the central focus of all planning documents.

Because the mission and commitment statements are the central focus of all planning documents, faculty and staff participate in an individualized (by grade level or team) Action Plan revision process at the beginning of every school year based on CRCT, GHSGT, EOCT and other new student data. The mission and commitment statements are reviewed as the faculty and staff focus on improving student learning and teaching by revising their Action Plans at least once a year.

Not only are the Action Plans a way for JCS to implement its mission and commitments, but the schools use research-based best practices to ensure the success of the commitments. JCS support Differentiated Learning, Learning-Focused Schools, Understanding By Design, and benchmarking. Other applications utilized at JCS are High Schools that Work, Big 6 Information Problem-Solving Model for critical thinking, and teacher and student mentoring.

The district-level SACS Steering Committee revised the School Improvement Cycle in the fall of 2005 to ensure the Action Plans and the mission/commitment statements are reviewed and revised annually. Teachers revisited the Action Plans in mid-September/October to update with new information and to ensure that the educational strategies listed will fulfill the mission/commitments for the 2006-2007 school year.

JCS communicates their mission and commitment statements to the stakeholders, including the community, parents, students, PTO, partners, and School Council. JCS publishes the

mission/commitments in student agendas, handbooks, and agendas, parent/student advisement, the website, school council meetings, and at the Community Breakfast held at the beginning of each school year. The mission/commitments are also prominently placed in all classrooms and in central locations in the schools.

## **STANDARD 2 Governance and Leadership**

The school and the governing board promote the capacity of stakeholders to improve student learning by providing appropriate leadership, governance, and organization.

### **DISTRICT SUMMARY**

Jefferson City Schools has an elected school board, consisting of seven members. The members create school policies, which are available at the district's website through the GSBA e-board at <http://www.gsbaeboard.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/JeffersonAgenda.woa>.

In accordance with JCS Board policies, JCS meets, recognizes, and preserves administrative privileges of the administrative head of the school, and the Board does so without interference. Major functions of the governing board in the school system are:

1. To manage the district's various departments, units, and programs effectively.
2. To provide professional advice and counsel to the superintendent and to advisory groups established by Board action. Preferably, where feasible, this will be done through reviewing alternatives, analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of each, and recommending a selection from among the alternatives.
3. To implement the management function so as to assure the best and most effective learning programs, through achieving such sub goals as (a) providing leadership in keeping abreast of current educational developments; (b) arranging for the staff development necessary to the establishment and operation of learning programs that better meet more learner needs; (c) coordinating cooperative efforts at improvement of learning programs, facilities, equipment and materials; and (d) providing access to the decision-making process for improvement ideas of staff, students, parents, and others.

JCS maintains the mission and commitment statements through school-level committees and grade-level/departmental teams. The school-level committees participate in decision-making within the organization of the SACS ten standards of school improvement. Examples of committee focus include: Assessment, Instruction, Stakeholder Communication, and Continuous Process of Improvement. The mission and commitment statements are also integrated into the goals and strategies of the grade-level/departmental School Improvement Action Plans. School-level administrators, including principals, assistant principals, and lead teachers, review committee and team recommendations to support faculty and staff in school planning and decision-making. Leadership is within all stakeholders.

The Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and Quality Core Curriculum (QCC - in particular areas) are enacted, supported, and assessed by all stakeholders through the Action Plan goals and strategies. Each teacher has his or her own curriculum notebook and curriculum map. Formal and informal assessment occurs every day in each classroom, and state-mandated tests are given in the appropriate grade levels. Student data is compiled and used to design individualized instruction. The JCS Board of Education allocates resources to support student achievement

based on grade-level/departmental team recommendations in the Action Plan goals and strategies.

Ongoing professional development is determined by departmental/grade-level Action Plans. Professional Development for teachers and staff is embedded in the Professional Learning Plan Schedule for each school year. Professional development includes in-house consultants and mentors, bringing in professional consultants, programs and conferences sponsored by the Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA), state conferences, and educational reading and group work. Professional Development is evaluated by self-assessment through the Action Plan goals. Other elements of professional development include new teacher orientation, new teacher workshops, summer off-contract work, and the teacher mentoring program.

The leadership of the schools provides a written security and crisis management plan that provides appropriate training for staff and students. Each classroom has an emergency flip chart that faculty and staff are able to easily access at any time. The schools also participate in fire and tornado drills, and have a plan for bomb threats. The schools also have an evacuation plan and a call chain in case of an emergency. JHS routinely uses drug dogs to check the school grounds for illegal substances.

Each school has various extra-curricular activities that are supported at the building level by school leadership and Board of Education policy. This is also communicated through newsletters, school schedules, athletic handbooks, club lists, and the website.

## **STANDARD 3 Curriculum**

The school offers a research-based curriculum that supports best practices and clearly defines expectations for student learning.

### **DISTRICT SUMMARY**

The state of Georgia is in the process of shifting from the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) to the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). JCS teachers follow the state-mandated curriculum in each grade level. Teachers have been provided with release time and common planning to create GPS units that include examining the standards, forming essential questions, developing enduring understandings, and creating a variety of assessment types that are aligned with the curriculum and expectations for student learning. Assessment pieces include: unit plan, classroom performance assessments, writing samples, benchmarking, state-mandated testing, and software diagnostic reports (PLATO, LEXIA, STAR Reading/Math, Guided Reading, SAT/ACT/CRCT programs). In each content area, teachers ensure they are communicating, teaching, and assessing essential curriculum knowledge and skills by using Learning Focused Schools (LFS) strategies in the classroom.

JCS teachers use a variety of strategies to ensure a challenging curriculum for its diverse student population. JCS has a commitment to meeting the needs of all students and provide accommodations for different learning styles. Each school has a gifted program to provide acceleration for students within the state-mandated curriculum standards. The gifted program at Jefferson City Schools recognizes the unique values, needs, and gifts of the multi-talented student. Our guiding principle is to provide learning opportunities that allow freedom for exploring, experiencing, and expressing. A major focus is to develop within the student a desire for excellence and motivation for self-directedness by promoting special curricula, enrichment, and acceleration of course content. JCS's Special Education department provides teachers at each grade level to support students with disabilities in student performance expectations.

Each school also has a network to provide remediation for students falling below student expectations. JES, JMS, and JHS host after-school programming to assist students in meeting CRCT/GHSGT and classroom requirements. In addition, JES, JMS, and JHS offer remediation during the school day. Differentiated lesson plans, project-based learning, cooperative learning, and technology (software, Interactive Whiteboards, Projectors, graphing calculators, etc.) provide for the different learning styles of our diverse population.

Each teacher has an assigned notebook developed by administration and departments/grade-levels that contains teacher-created GPS units and support materials. The curriculum notebooks provide pacing guides, unpacked standards, glossaries, unit plans, standard frameworks, and models. JCS administration, lead teachers, and library media specialists may easily review notebooks to provide support for curriculum instruction.

Community resources used to support and enhance the curriculum include guest speakers, field trips, the local newspaper, community mentors, and Partners in Education. Interdisciplinary and cross-curricular experiences are created around field trips such as 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy's

Washington trip, JMS's GA Aquarium trip, and JHS's Georgia Shakespeare field trips. Other examples of curriculum support include new teacher orientations, PeachStar UnitedStreaming for GPS videos, parent workshops, and the use of consultants for math, writing, science, technology, and test prep. Teachers in each school also collaborate to develop cross-curricular activities in the content areas and through extra-curricular activities. Each school also has fine arts, music, and physical education classes. JES has a full-time Spanish teacher.

Extra curricular activities at JCS include: Total Person Program (JHS), Academic Bowl (JMS, JHS), FBLA (JMS, JHS), Family Astronomy Night (JMS), Curriculum Nights (JES), Family Reading Nights (JES), School Book Fairs (JES, JMS), School-Yard Habitat (JMS), in addition to school clubs and sports. JCS also supports the annual Scotland Exchange program. The JCS Board maintains a policy whereby all student activities are directly under the control and supervision of the building principal who is responsible for the scheduling, supervision, and evaluation of all phases of these activities.



## **STANDARD 4 Instruction**

The school employs instructional strategies and provides services that facilitate learning for all students.

### **DISTRICT SUMMARY**

Jefferson City Schools' district-wide mission is the central focus of the school improvement Action Plans. The Action Plan goals articulate expectations for student learning, and Action Plan strategies develop the instructional means for reaching goals. Frequent assessment through benchmarking, unit plan evaluations, and state testing ensures that students achieve goals, meet curriculum expectations, and fulfill the school mission and commitments. The schools use research-based best practices such as Differentiated Learning, Learning Focused Schools, Understanding By Design (GPS), and benchmark testing to reach Action Plan goals. Assessment also guarantees that the instructional strategies prepared in the Action Plan are successful or revised when needed.

Each school provides a daily framework for instructional delivery that ensures or exceeds the state recommended time of 25 hours per week. In support of student learning climate, JCS uses Learning-Focused strategies as the framework for informing student learning, engaging students in the learning process, and measuring student understanding. The learning climate is further enhanced by Learning-Focused walk-throughs and observations, posting student work and standards in the classrooms and hallways, providing a Bullying Prevention program, school-level and grade-level incentives, award programs, and student achievement recognition.

Higher-order thinking skills and active student participation are encouraged throughout the instructional process with Learning Focused Schools strategies (Retention, Application, and Transfer), prior learning assessments (formal and informal), project-based learning, literature circles, and technology integration. Various instructional services, such as sound field systems, Advanced Placement courses, Joint-Enrollment, EIP/Title I teachers, inclusion models, after-school tutoring, and use of manipulatives, support diverse learning styles and needs.

Many resources are used to enhance instruction and learning. Human resources include guest speakers, business partners, community helpers, and instructional consultants (UGA, DOE, RESA, ETTC, and contracted). Natural resources include the Wildlife Habitat and Outdoor Classroom at JMS. Technology resources include 1105 modern computers, research-based software, auditory support (audiotapes), Interactive Whiteboards, Geometer's SketchPad, PeachStar United Streaming, sound field systems, and GALILEO databases. Material resources include textbook adoptions, library media center print and media collections supporting GPS, and the availability of a sensory room (JES).

Secondary level students receive credits on defined performance criteria, and the JCS yearly calendar consists of 180 days of teaching and learning. School schedules and teacher lesson plans ensure that a minimum of 25 hours of planned learning activities occur per week.

## **STANDARD 5 Assessment and Evaluation**

The school uses a comprehensive assessment system to monitor and evaluate student learning and to improve curriculum and instruction.

### **DISTRICT SUMMARY**

Jefferson City Schools' teaching staff employs indicators and performance expectations by clearly posting Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), Essential Questions, and Enduring Understandings within curriculum unit planning. Teachers routinely use checklists and rubrics as instructed in GPS training (Understanding By Design) and Learning-Focused Schools.

JCS student testing data is collected and disaggregated not only at the beginning of the year when target students are identified, but also throughout the year with the benchmark assessments through the Online Assessment System (OAS) as well as through informal test practice with Study Island and the SAT/ACT Prep from Triumph College. CRCT, EOCT, GHGST data is disaggregated, maintained, and accessible through a bound document housed in the administrative offices and on the state website. Teachers and administrators review Action Plan goals and strategies with each set of benchmark results to provide periodic analysis of student performance.

Each JCS school maintains documents containing summaries of student performance data, community demographics, school characteristics, and stakeholder perception information. Yearly surveys are conducted by the faculty, staff, and students to analyze the instructional and organizational effectiveness of the schools. The results are reviewed and evaluated by administrators and teachers and are used to improve student learning. Examples of surveys used include What Works in Schools, Levels of Technology Integration (LoTi), and Victoria Bernhardt's survey, which aligns with the Continuous Improvement Continuum (CIC) activities all teachers participate in twice a year. All of this information is summarized and analyzed in a yearly presentation to the staff, and the PowerPoint is available to all stakeholders through the main JCS website.

Results of student assessments are communicated to stakeholders through progress reports, parent conferences, parent nights, student support teams, weekly folders, agendas, and in letters sent home. Older students also receive individual attention through goal-setting sessions with a counselor/administrator at JMS and through the Odyssey Program advisement at JHS. CRCT/GHSGT results are also posted online by the state for anyone to review. The local newspaper also prints school honor rolls for publicity and celebration for all stakeholders.

Action Plans are developed and reviewed by each department or grade level in the system. The plans merge together to become the school improvement plan. The plans have SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) that combine student learning needs, state and local performance requirements, and curriculum goals. Assessments to evaluate the success of the departmental/grade-level goals include benchmarks, and informal assessments. The school improvement process includes an annual review of the success of the action plans.

## **STANDARD 6 Resources**

The school has sufficient human, physical, and material resources to support its vision, mission, and goals.

### **Human Resources**

After five years of rapid growth (70%), Jefferson City Schools has continued to increase staffing to meet all personnel requirements as outlined in the SACS accreditation standards. JCS has added a Director of Middle and Secondary Instruction, a full-time English Language Learning (ELL) instructor, a High School Graduation Coach, a full-time counselor at JES, a half-time counselor at JMS and JHS, an attendance clerk at JHS, and a registrar at JMS and JHS.

### **Financial Resources**

The budget process begins in February for the upcoming school year. Assessments are made based on Action Plans, legislation changes, DOE requirements, Director of Facilities, and board commitments. Staffing analysis is prepared based on projected student enrollment and instructional needs. Other non-instructional areas are compared to historical information to determine if any fluctuating market prices are or will impact our budgetary needs. Changes in operations are also assessed for financial implications. Both instructional and non-instructional components are presented to the board members for consideration and held for 30 days to the public. Then, if no objections arise, the budget becomes adopted. Each year, the State Department of Audit's conducts a review our financial information and prepares our financial statements. We have series of checks and balances to ensure proper reviews are in place to eliminate or reduce the ability to make financial entries or process checks without a secondary assessment. The administrative head is the highest paid individual for the system and within each school.

### **Physical Resources**

JCS meets local, state, and federal standards and regulations for physical resources. JCS is in compliance with health and safety requirements and holds a Facility Study Plan that monitors the site, facilities, and equipment.

### **Material Resources**

Jefferson City Schools library media centers maintain a comprehensive collection of current media, books, reference sources, and periodicals in print and electronic formats that support student learning, the curriculum, and the instructional program. JES currently support 10 books per student or over, and JMS and JHS are working towards the provision of 10 books per student. With the 70% growth rate, combined with the 50% cut of library budgets in 2003-06, JMS and JHS has set a plan to incrementally increase the number of books until requirements are met and exceeded. Through flexible scheduling and collaboration with the teaching staff of the schools, the media specialists ensure that all students and staff members have access to materials, equipment, and media instruction and programming. Currently, the JCS libraries use the

Mandarin cataloging system, and the library media specialists have received training on this system in order to train students and staff. All JCS library media centers provide orientations for all students as well as training on state services such as GALILEO and PeachStar United Streaming. JCS library media specialists work closely with classroom teachers to utilize the research-based benefits of collaboration within the curriculum.

JCS library media centers receive funding from the state of Georgia. Currently, all JCS library media centers receive 100% of their funding. State funding for 2006-07 has increased 2/3 per FTE to \$13.04 per student (in comparison with \$19.54 in 2003). The library media centers also engage in routine fundraisers to work towards a sufficient budget for library media services and instructional programming. JCS libraries hold library media handbooks for teachers and provide direction to challenged material requests (JCS board office) and the Internet Use Policy (student handbook/website/new student orientation).

## **STANDARD 7 Support Services for Student Learning**

The school has a comprehensive program of guidance and other services that supports the development and well being of all students.

### **DISTRICT SUMMARY**

Jefferson City Schools District believes that part of creating “fully functioning adults” is to support the guidance and well being of all the student body. JCS schools provide access to guidance services for all students. Most importantly, all JCS students are able to access a full-time and a part-time counselor by self-referral or by staff, student, or parent referral. Counselors also provide lesson plans and instructional programs for schools and classrooms on guidance and development topics. At the middle school, all students participate in a goal-setting session (academic and personal) with the assistant principal or school counselor. At the high school, each student is assigned an instructor for additional academic/career guidance through the *Odyssey* program. JHS also hosts the Youth Apprentice Program to assist students in the school to work transition. A Student Support Team (SST) helps with student placement and provides organized guidance and attention for students who “fall through the cracks.” An active Anti-Bullying program at each school assures each student feels they have a safe learning environment. Students are engaged in career planning activities through a county-wide 8<sup>th</sup> grade Careers Fair, career speakers who visit all three schools on a regular basis, and Georgia Career Information System (GCIS) activities in JMS and JHS.

All JCS students are informed at the beginning of the school year through the student handbook and orientation that they have full-time access to a school counselor. Students are encouraged to follow school-level procedures to set up appointments for counseling. Teachers and staff may also recommend students for individual or small group counseling. The Mentoring Program at the middle school recommends around 30-40 students for linking to adult mentors from the Jefferson community. Students may apply for this program, but it is mainly selected by teacher and counselor recommendations. Students work with community mentors to set goals, communicate progress, and talk about issues and conflicts. Mentors work closely with the school counselors to communicate problems and issues involving these students. JHS entered into a partnership with Jackson County Family Connection to establish a mentor program for at-risk high school students in fall 2006.

JCS provides full-time nurses to provide students with easy access to health and nutrition assistance. Nurses provide pamphlets and advice on health, nutrition, and safety. Nurses also provide programs such as the Health Fair for students to read and participate in topics from a variety of health, nutrition, and safety topics. At the elementary school, students participate in Red Ribbon Week and counselor-led safety activities. At the middle school, students participate in health and physical education classes and special programs such as the Drunk Driving simulation (led by local community police). All schools participate in mandatory state safety drills (school and bus evacuations and tornado drills), and the red safety flip-book is available in each classroom. Students receive a complete hot breakfast and lunch from the school’s cafeteria. Low-income students have the option to receive free or reduced lunches. All students within the city limits have access to bus transportation before and after school.

JCS students are referred by a Student Support Team to receive a comprehensive educational evaluation in order to determine eligibility and need for special education services. These referrals must be preceded by interventions implemented by the Student Support Team. Development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is essential to the support of students with disabilities. Students are served based upon their strengths/weaknesses and recommendations by the IEP team. Special education teachers are placed at every grade level to help support students with disabilities. In addition, there is also support from a school psychologist, 3 speech-language therapists, an occupational therapist, and a physical therapist.

Students are identified for the English Language Learner (ELL) program when they first enter the school system. If their home language is something other than English, they are tested using the new Access Test. ELL students are supported through a separate class period for the appropriate time with a certified ELL teacher. They receive modifications and accommodations in content classes as well. They are supported by the ELL teacher, the counselor, the administrators, and by their teachers. ELL students are assessed yearly through the Access test in the spring. If they score above the limit, they are reassessed with testing information and through a meeting with classroom teachers to see if they are eligible to exit the program. After their exit, they are monitored for two years by the Student Support Team (SST) to make sure their progress continues.

JCS secures the assistance of other agencies for students whose needs cannot be met by the school. Students may be referred to outside mental health and psychological counselors. JCS works closely with DFACS for student issues that have gone beyond the school's ability to resolve. JCS also works with the Jackson County Family Connection to coordinate social services. Opportunities provided by Advantage Behavior Health are communicated to staff and students. The local police department provides both programs and student counseling for behavior problems. Other community programs include: PeachCare information, Assist-a-Family, Jefferson Lions Club eyeglass program, and the Migrant program.

JCS uses the SASIxp password-protected program to maintain and update student information and behavior records in compliance to state and federal law and regulations. Counselors also keep paper records such as student information, logs, test scores, behavior records, and notes in fire-proof locked files in the school vaults. Access to the information is given by key only. School administration has access to keys and controls the level of access for teachers and staff. A three-quarter time staff person to watch over the accuracy of these records was added in the 2004-2005 school year.

Both teachers and parents need assistance in understanding the various stages of student development. Teachers are provided with in-service programs, email updates, and newsletters in counseling, drug information, and student support. Counselors, a school psychologist, and a special education director support teachers and staff in understanding student behavior through programs and through daily communications. Parents are assisted with understanding student development through school newsletters (Parent Connect, The Voice), school meetings, Open Houses, Good News cards and positive referral phone calls, parent nights, special events, and school conferences.

## **STANDARD 8 Stakeholder Communications and Relationships**

The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

### **DISTRICT SUMMARY**

The Jefferson City Schools District has a rich history of community support and involvement. From academics to athletics, JCS partners with community stakeholders to support student achievement. JCS administration, school board members, and teacher representatives met with business leaders from Jackson County Leadership to discuss possible ways to support students and teachers. From Jackson County Leadership, parent groups, business partners, and community outreach, volunteers from the Jefferson area are encouraged to participate in programs such as JES's "Helping Hands" and "Community Readers." JMS's programs include the Mentoring program, Careers speakers and Career/College Days, sixth grade unit participation from the local government, and partners-in-education collaboration with GPS in mathematics (Banking) and science (Geology). JHS fosters partnerships with the Youth Apprenticeship Program, Agriculture Day, interaction with Partners-In-Education, and through the Total Person Program (TPP).

JCS schools felt that stakeholder communication was such a priority that each school included communication as part of the school-level commitment statements. Currently, JCS provides a website for the district and for each school. The website is updated by a faculty member at each school, and school administration and staff work together to ensure that the information is current, informative, and accessible. To increase access to school information, the school website recently added the school improvement planning process and test score information. Each of the three schools also sends academic, athletic, and facilities articles and information to the local paper, The Jackson Herald, to inform a wider community audience. Each school also maintains a school marquee, and publishes school newsletters (online and in print). Schools hold quarterly school council meetings that include administration, faculty, parents, and business partners. Finally, all groups come together at the beginning of each school year to participate in the annual Community Breakfast. School board members and JCS administration review the accomplishments of JCS from the previous year and disseminate upcoming information for all stakeholders.

Parents are a special part of our school community in Jefferson. Schools begin the year with an open survey during orientation to gather information on the knowledge and skills of parents as well as their interest in volunteer activities and programs. Parent-teacher organizations (PTO and PATS) give parents an opportunity to initiate, organize, and support school functions, events, and fundraisers. PTO and PATS officers often encourage greater involvement from the parent population by phone calls, emails, and newsletters. Although some parents cannot manage full involvement in the parent-teacher organizations, the schools offer other programs such as "Helping Hands," mentoring, Sports and Band Booster clubs, school store fundraisers, individual classroom project involvement opportunities, and counselor-led programs to raise awareness on helping school-age children succeed. Individual classroom teachers also enhance student achievement by communications with parents on assignments, grades, and information

on how to help their child with projects. Research projects are posted online to help link parents to research guides and web and library resources.

SACS committee members at each school-level use the annual Bernhardt teacher/parent/student surveys for school improvement to assess satisfaction with school climate. Recommendations for each stakeholder group are made based on survey data. At the staff level, the administration organizes staff luncheons, parties, and school team-levels organize socials and lunches. Open communication is encouraged through emails, staff room bulletin boards, and through school and grade-level meetings. For students, the administration and teachers organize school spirit events, Anti-Bullying programs, student/faculty competitions, after-school academic and athletic activities, morning news programs, school newsletters, and awards programs. Schools also make a commitment to displaying exemplary student work, contributions, and successes. For parents, all schools have a welcoming office and website with parent-teacher information flyers, parent night programs, and an open opportunity to set up conferences with administration and/or faculty concerning student learning.

In the high stakes environment of *No Child Left Behind*, JCS has increased access to expectations for student learning and the results of the school improvement efforts. New teachers are inducted into the school improvement process through a pre-training workshop, new teacher monthly meetings at JMS and JHS, and mentoring. All JCS teachers and staff revisit the improvement process during the annual Community Breakfast as well as in individual departments/grade-levels and in the SACS school-level committee meetings. Departments and grade-levels create Action Plan goals that are displayed on the website and in a central school location for all staff, students, and parents to view. When available, testing and benchmark results are displayed for comparison with school goals. To keep community stakeholders involved, the school council, school partners, and parent-teacher meetings review Action Plan goals and strategies as well as SACS school-level committee recommendations.

Thirty-five years ago (1972), a proposal was made to the Georgia High School Association (by Mr. Morris Bryan, Jr. on behalf of Jefferson High School and the City of Jefferson) that championships (track and field) for all five school size classifications be held at one location at the same time. It was guaranteed that recognition of excellence of effort and accomplishments would be effectively done. Cooperatively, it has worked beautifully. Over 200 volunteers from Jefferson City Schools and the Jefferson community work this meet. In addition, the City of Jefferson presents awards over and beyond those that are provided by the Georgia High School Association (Best Performance Trophies and Medals, Morris M. Bryan Memorial Trophy (Outstanding Performer-all class), Herman J. Stegman Award (High Point Champion), and W.C. Fordham Award.



## **STANDARD 9 Citizenship**

The school helps students develop civic, social, and personal responsibility.

### **DISTRICT SUMMARY**

The Jefferson City Schools District faculty and staff believe that in order to reach our mission of graduating fully functioning adults, we must foster and maintain a safe learning environment by developing the character of our learners. All schools included this in their individual commitment statements. JCS supports character development through regular academic instruction, extracurricular activities, classroom and small group instruction, and special programming. JCS also encourages character development by recognizing superior examples of student behavior through programs such as the Dragon Awards (JES), the Dragon Deed card (JMS) and the 3-D Award/Rotary Award (JHS). JCS schools all believe in making positive referrals for students, which include positive parent phone calls, letters home, and special recognitions.

A Bullying Prevention Program has been initiated in each school, and no-tolerance policies have been adopted to support all students in a safe learning environment. At all levels, students participate in Anti-Bully instructional activities, student surveys, intervention support groups (for victims and bullies), an anti-bullying pledge, and conferences with staff/counselors/administration as needed. Faculty and staff support the Bullying Prevention program with informational school meetings, teacher handbook policies on bullying, and by providing effective supervision during all student activities.

JCS provide students with opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership, responsibility, independence, and decision-making. At the elementary level, students participate in counselor-led programs and the Botvin Life Skills curriculum (grades 3-5). Activities are organized around a theme that helps students practice life skills such as goal-setting, decision-making, sharing, respecting, and building self-esteem. JES has recently implemented *Chick-fil-A's* "Core Essentials Program", which focuses on one character education word per month and is the centerpiece of the morning video announcements with specialized programming. The Core Essentials Program provides students with bookmarks and table tents, which are printed in English and in Spanish to encourage discussion of the character education words at home. The Fifth Grade Academy holds a monthly *Lunch at the Ritz* during lunchtime to recognize students who have exhibited exemplary character education traits. The honored students sit together at a decorated table, and they are served a special meal. Special fundraising benefits such as the Red Cross fund for Hurricane Katrina, "Pennies for Patients" for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Georgia, Holiday food drives, and sports team "Support Days" encourage students to be class leaders in an effort to raise support for the larger community. At the middle school level, students learn responsibility for themselves by meeting with the counselor and assistant principal to set both academic and personal achievement goals. The student council allows student leaders from each homeroom to participate in school planning, special events, and school-wide fundraisers for the school and the community. Students use planners to guide and organize their learning and to foster responsibility for academic and personal planning. Extracurricular activities such as academic and school-sponsored clubs, contests, and sports also

give students an opportunity to experience different roles and responsibilities. At the high school level, students participate in the “Odyssey For Success” program, which links students to an advisor and student peer group twice a month to help them develop a career and character portfolio during their high school experience. Students may also apply for the Scotland Exchange program, which fosters leadership, responsibility, and independence through the cultural two-week exchange. The new JCS Air Force ROTC program also allows students to gain leadership experience.

JCS schools clearly communicate all student conduct guidelines to students, parents, and staff. Student handbooks are online for each of the schools for access to all stakeholders. Student handbooks are also printed for middle and high school in the student agenda so students have convenient, daily access to guidelines. Students are also responsible for reading and signing that they have understood the student guidelines. Grade-levels and classrooms have additional policies that they have posted by classroom or through a signed course syllabi. Student conduct guidelines are posted in every classroom, and if guidelines are not met, the school-wide behavior policy is referred to in the student handbook. To improve communication with parents, administration and counselors send periodic newsletters that include comments and concerns about policy. Teachers and staff are provided with a staff handbook that clearly outlines behavior policy, guidelines, and procedures.

JCS monitors conduct and behavior records through the SASI system. The classroom teacher and registrars strictly monitor attendance. The Compulsory Attendance Law supports JCS’s Attendance Policy outlined in the student handbook. School administration contacts parents with an official letter over four unexcused absences. After five missed days, excused or not excused, additional letters are sent to inform parents of student attendance records and to remind them of the policy and law. A referral is made to the Jackson County Attendance Review Board after seven unexcused absences are reported. The school counselor and administration may work with other agencies if student absenteeism is not resolved. All schools alternately honor all students with perfect attendance awards quarterly and at the end of the school year.

Student conduct is monitored in JCS schools on several levels. Student responsibility for behavior is encouraged through classroom-level consequences, and conduct is clearly communicated to parents through notes in the folders or agendas, phone calls, letters or emails, and through parent-student-teacher conferences. Strict teacher supervision during, before, and after school ensures a safe learning environment for students throughout their school day. JCS also monitors behavior through supporting students who have exemplary conduct. Student of the Month and Student of the Week programs encourage students to excel in both grades and character.

## **STANDARD 10 Continuous Process of School Improvement**

The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

### **DISTRICT SUMMARY**

The Jefferson City Schools District organized a district-level SACS Steering Committee in the Fall of 2005. The committee consisted of two representatives from each of the three schools (now four), the Associate Superintendent, the Director of Special Education, and the district Director of Middle and Secondary Instruction. The SACS Steering Committee studied several models for school improvement and decided to adopt the "School Improvement Action Plan" model and the "Continuous Improvement Continuums" (CIC) survey outlined in Victoria Bernhardt's book *The School Portfolio Toolkit* (2002). The committee also decided to restructure existing local school committees into the ten SACS standards to fully encompass school improvement review. These structures allowed administration, staff, students, and community to be fully engaged in the school improvement process by increasing communication through planning documents and organized discussions.

Because the SACS Steering Committee wished to honor the rich history and tradition of Jefferson City Schools, committee members researched into the goals and beliefs for the past decades. From this, a mission statement and a favorite quote were adopted for use in all four schools. To individualize the mission statement for each school, a committee of faculty members at each school level interpreted the goal statement into action-oriented commitment statements. The goals were previewed by all staff, school council members and parent organizations, students, and by the general community through the website and newspaper. Goal and commitment statements became the central focus of all planning documents. Action Plans based all goals and strategies on fulfilling these commitments.

The JCS Action Plan documents have become JCS's most powerful, comprehensive tool for school improvement. The Action Plan cycle results in a final document to be published for all stakeholders, but it is an ongoing, strategic development process. In August, grade-levels or departments meet to review new student testing information and to reevaluate Action Plan goals and strategies from the following year. Teachers work with administration and a local RESA representative to ensure that Action Plans meet the following requirements: (1) goals support the mission and commitment statements (2) goals meet the SMART requirements (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and tangible), and (3) strategies are aligned to goals. JCS's benchmark testing through the Online Assessment System (OAS) as well as local classroom assessments regularly chart the progress of reaching the goals before state-testing (CRCT, EOCT) in the spring. Department Heads or Grade-Level representatives work with their teams to monitor and adjust strategies and interventions throughout the year to ensure that goals are met. The school board and school councils also receive information on progress towards goals to ensure that all stakeholders are aligned in their support of student learning. Action Plans are used throughout the year to determine budgeting priorities and to focus state grant applications in the spring. The Action Plan cycle encourages an organized support system that focuses all stakeholders toward highest gain targets.

JCS sent the SACS Steering Committee to the SACS CASI Annual Conference in the fall of 2005 to ensure knowledgeable staff support of the ten SACS school-level committees. The Steering Committee developed a simple filing system for each school based on each standard, and school-level committees collected documentation and recommendations for each indicator. Committees also developed a graphic organizer to document information and progress to ensure communication with their committees, administration, as well as community stakeholders. These documents were then compiled to present a full-school view of school planning for faculty, staff, administration, school partners, and community stakeholders. The district SACS Steering Committee also used these documents to assist in district-level communication and reporting.

JCS's professional development is driven by the school-level Action Plans and SACS committee suggestions. This new level of planning has moved the JCS school system from the "cafeteria approach" of developing a professional development plan to a goal-based and needs-based planning system. Teachers, administration, and consultants work together to determine professional development opportunities that serve as a strategy toward meeting our mission and goals. Teachers and staff also have increased opportunities to communicate professional development needs through goal setting. Administration has the ability to suggest professional development opportunities that are based on goals and target data. The Action Planning process, including professional development, is a critical part of the school improvement process.

**Jefferson Academy  
Making the Transition  
Fall 2006**

**STANDARD 1 Beliefs and Mission**

The school communicates a vision, statement of beliefs, and mission that provide a focus for improving the performance of both the students and the school.

In fall 2005, all schools decided to adopt and embrace the same mission statement. Jefferson Academy will adopt the same vision used by the existing schools in Jefferson City Schools. School commitments (beliefs) were developed by each staff to reach the agreed upon mission. Commitments were developed by grade level spans and are posted in the schools and other public places: PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

**Grades 3-5: Commitments**

1. **We commit to researched-based instruction in all content areas.**
2. **We commit to differentiated instruction.**
3. **We commit to the use of assessments to guide instruction.**
4. **We commit to a positive learning environment.**
5. **We commit to timely parent communication.**
6. **We commit to positive student behavior through character development.**

**STANDARD 2 Governance and Leadership**

The school and the governing board promote the capacity of stakeholders to improve student learning by providing appropriate leadership, governance, and organization.

**Governance**

The same board of education policies that govern the existing school will govern Jefferson Academy. The principal of the school will be charged with implementing policies and procedures and will do so without interference.

**Leadership**

The principal of the school will follow the district school improvement planning process. Upon opening, all activities will be governed by the existing school improvement plan. The school improvement plan was developed by all teachers and staff of Jefferson Elementary School. Staff looked at student performance and current practice to determine the next areas of need. These needs shaped the professional development, technology, and material needs of the students. Administratively, plans have been made to move student records, shift transportation routes, extra-curricular activities, and crisis management plans to the new building. The school will open with a principal, assistant principal, and an instructional lead teacher for 563 students. These staff members are currently employed with Jefferson City Schools and are an integral part of the planning process. Teachers representing all grade levels as well as staff from Jefferson Middle

School, the Board of Education and central office have served on a planning committee charged with planning the transition to the new school.

### **STANDARD 3 Curriculum**

The school offers a research-based curriculum that supports best practices and clearly defines expectations for student learning.

Students at Jefferson Academy will use a combination of Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) and Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) for curriculum guidance. The state of Georgia is in the process of rolling out each curriculum area in grade levels bands. In 2006-2007, Jefferson Academy will use GPS for English language arts and science. QCC will guide social studies and mathematics. Teachers will receive a curriculum notebook for their grade level, which will give clear direction about what is to be taught, how it is to be assessed, and strategies for accelerating or re-educating students as needed. Professional learning will be provided to support curriculum implementation.

Students will have weekly instruction in art, music, Spanish, and PE (twice a week).

### **STANDARD 4 Instruction**

The school employs instructional strategies and provides services that facilitate learning for all students.

The instructional program for Jefferson Academy aligns to the mission and commitment of the school. The school's school improvement planning process is an integral part of the district's school improvement plan. The partnership in planning helps to ensure a smooth transition from PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

Students will be assessed as required by the state. In addition, teachers will examine portfolio data: writing samples, Lexia reports, STAR mathematics, and STAR reading reports, and running records. Teachers will conduct pretests at the beginning of the year to determine mastery of content before the school year starts. During the year, students will be assessed using benchmark assessments, writing assessments, etc.

Students will be flexibly grouped for instruction that meets the requirements for the state of Georgia—for grade 3, 21 students per class; for grades 4-5, 28 or less students per class. All teachers and paraprofessionals are highly qualified and have certificates that match their teaching assignments. Students with disabilities will be served in the inclusion models for the entire day. Students with extreme disabilities will be served in a self-contained classroom with limited inclusion opportunities. Students who need enrichment will be served in the gifted program using a combination of the pullout, cluster, and collaborative models. Students who need acceleration will be served in the state of Georgia's Early Intervention Program (EIP). The augmented model is used to serve students in small group rotation. Jefferson Academy will receive Title I services through the targeted assistance program. Students served in EIP will get extended support

through Title I. In addition, students who do not meet the state's qualifications for EIP, but need additional support, will receive targeted Title I support.

Resources that currently exist in Jefferson Elementary will be moved to Jefferson Academy. All 3-5 curriculum and instructional materials will be moved to the new school. In addition, technology needs have been planned and organized to be ready for students and staff. In each classroom, there will be 8 drops, 7 modern computers, one printer, and one TV so that all teachers and students can receive video announcements. Plans are to add a sound field system and LCD projector per classroom as funds permit. The school will have the same access to the internet and email system as the other three schools. Sufficient servers, software, and supplies have been ordered so that the electronic environment is equal to the other schools in the system.

Based on action from the Jefferson Academy planning committee, staff members from Jefferson Academy and Jefferson Elementary School are studying the International Baccalaureate Program, Primary Years Program. The Level I application will be submitted in November 2007. This program will unite the two schools and provide an international focus for students, staff, and families as the Jefferson community continues to grow and change. Teachers from both schools are in the study process where they are visiting schools with the program and they are attending monthly seminars to better understand the program.

The Jefferson Academy planning committee also made a proposal for school dress. Based on input from PreK-5 parents, staff from the Fifth Grade Academy's program 'Dress for Success', a dress code proposal was made to the Jefferson Board of Education for students at Jefferson Academy and Jefferson Elementary School. Students will wear red, white, blue, and khaki.

Students at Jefferson Academy will attend school for 180 days, 7:50 am – 3:30 pm.

#### **STANDARD 5 Assessment and Evaluation**

The school uses a comprehensive assessment system to monitor and evaluate student learning and to improve curriculum and instruction.

Jefferson Academy will continue with its testing program as mandated by the state of Georgia. In addition, the system-wide benchmark administration and monitoring will continue. All results will be communicated to parents and all stake holders. The results will guide instruction. This information can be found in the district's web site and the governor's annual report card posted on the web site. Data will continue to be disaggregated to determine student learning and program modification needs. This is a critical part of the school improvement planning process.

#### **STANDARD 6**

The school has sufficient human, financial, physical, and material resources to support its vision, mission, and goals.

## **Human Resources**

In the school of 563, both the principal and assistant principal will have a Georgia leadership certificate (L-5) recognized by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GPSC). The instructional lead teacher has a master's in early childhood education and a reading specialist add-on certification.

In addition, there will be the following staff: 1 guidance counselor, 1 media specialist and 1 assistant, and 2 support staff for administration. All teaching staff will have certification that meets the highly qualified definition for the state of Georgia. In addition, all paraprofessional staff will have a certification recognized by the state of Georgia. All certificated personnel will be current with their requirement to earn at least 10 PLU hours for certificate renewal every 5 years.

Employee evaluation procedures will be followed. Paraprofessionals will be under the supervision of professional personnel. The same policies and procedures for substitute teachers will be followed for Jefferson Academy. Professional development resources and time will be allocated to Jefferson Academy personnel as it related to the school improvement plan.

Teachers at Jefferson Academy will have at least 40 minutes a day for planning/professional development. Class sizes will meet state and federal guidelines.

## **Financial Resources**

Jefferson Academy will follow the established budgeting and fiscal procedures used at the other schools. The school will receive resources from the state DOE as earned from the various programs. In addition, the school will receive a portion of the Title I resources to implement a Targeted Assistance program for students who are struggling academically.

The same auditing procedures and control will be used for Jefferson Academy. The principal will be the highest paid employee. All staff will be paid using the salary schedule based on certification and years of experience.

## **Physical Resources**

Jefferson Academy is a new building. It is scheduled to open for school in spring 2007. The building meets all the state requirements for safety, size, and operation.

## **Material Resources**

The media center at Jefferson Academy will maintain a comprehensive materials collection with a minimum of 10 books per student. The collection will be complete after three years. The three media specialists from the three Jefferson City Schools are forming the collection and providing guidance for furniture selection and placement.



Books will come from inventory from Jefferson Elementary that is not appropriate for the Prek-2 school and new books. A purchasing plan is in place that will span over three years. This plan is reflected in the district three-year budget projection.

The media center staff will work with all staff to ensure that collaboration is in place so that maximum benefits are attained from the resources. The existing policy for responding to challenged materials will be in place. The state allocation for media operation will be in place for Jefferson Elementary. The district policy for the use of the Internet will be enforced.

#### **STANDARD 7 Support Services for Student Learning**

The school has a comprehensive program of guidance and other services that supports the development and well being of all students.

Jefferson Academy will have one counselor. The counselor will perform the same functions as the counselor at Jefferson Elementary. Currently, the two counselors are assigned to Jefferson Elementary. They split their services by two grade level bands, K-2 and 3-5. This division will help provide a smooth transition for support services in the new school. The same Student Support Team (SST) procedures will be followed as well as the extension of instruction in the Good Touch/Bad Touch Program and Botvin Life Skills in grades 3-5.

#### **STANDARD 8 Stakeholder Communications and Relationships**

The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Communication with all stakeholders will be critical in the transition of adding a new school to the Jefferson community. The community support that has been generated in the past will be divided carefully between the two schools to avoid, when possible, duplicate requests (Helping Hands - 74 volunteers, Partners in Education - 6, test proctors, guest speakers, field trip chaperones) Some events and projects will be planned and hosted once rather than twice for students and families from both schools (Fall Festival, fund raisers, dances, school newspaper, parent handbook).

Some activities that involve the community will be hosted by both schools but scheduled so that parents can attend and be a part of both schools programs (Grade level curriculum nights, Muffins for Moms, Doughnuts for Dads). Some communication tools will be replicated and tailored to each site (daily agenda books, weekly folders, school web site, quarterly reports).

Elections for school-community committees have been conducted with representatives from both grade spans (School Council, PTO).

## **Parent Support**

A Parent Resource Center will be established at Jefferson Academy. The Jefferson Elementary School PTO officers created a plan for support for Jefferson Academy. The schools will begin by having the same officers serve for both schools. In addition, some activities will continue to be organized for both schools to avoid over extending parent participation requests (Fall festival, school dances and several fund raisers). Once Jefferson Academy opens, a separate election will be held for that PTO. Jefferson Academy PTO officers have established a generous start up operational budget for the new school.

## **STANDARD 9 Citizenship**

The school helps students develop civic, social, and personal responsibility.

Students will continue to have the opportunity to provide service to the school community. The school store will be replicated at Jefferson Academy. The store will be operated by students under the direction of a parent volunteer. Service learning projects (e.g. food bank, Pennies for Patients) will be a part of the students work.

Behavior guidelines will be communicated to parents and students at the beginning of each year. The Bully prevention program will be extended to Jefferson Academy from Jefferson Elementary School.

## **STANDARD 10 Continuous Process of School Improvement**

The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

The Jefferson City Schools school improvement planning process will be extended to Jefferson Academy. The action plans that are in place for 2006-2007 will be transferred to Jefferson Academy. This will provide a base for planning and instructing students. The leadership team will continue to guide the school improvement process. Members will be divided again by grade levels PreK-2 and 3-5 spans.

Each of the Jefferson Elementary School's school improvement committees in 2006-2007 had co-chairs. Each co-chair represented either the K-2 or 3-5 grade span. This will allow continuity in conducting the Jefferson City Schools improvement process.

## OVERVIEW

### Jefferson City Schools

Jefferson City Schools is a pre-kindergarten through grade twelve public school system that currently houses 2,398 students, 204 certified, and 128 classified staff. There are three schools, and a fourth school scheduled to open in the 2006-2007 school year. The schools are Jefferson Elementary School, Jefferson Middle School, and Jefferson High School. When the new school – Jefferson Academy - opens, there will be a PreK-2 and 3-5 split. Jefferson City Schools is located in Jefferson, Georgia in Jackson County 55 miles north of Atlanta.

The facilities in Jefferson City Schools have expanded quite a bit in the past five years and there is more expansion expected.

- A new middle school was built and opened in 2002. In fall of 2006, 21 new classrooms were added to that same building. In 2002, 325 students moved in the building, currently there are 558 students in the building.
- The high school went through major renovation in 2001. In 2006 the front of the building was renovated, the gymnasium was converted into the ROTC building, and a performing arts auditorium is under construction. In 2002, the high school served approximately 325 students; currently, there are 663 students.
- The elementary school went under major renovation in 1999. A new elementary school is being built and will open in spring 2007. In 2002, there were 600 students at Jefferson Elementary School; now there are 1207.
- In addition, there have been construction projects at the athletic fields. A revised facilities plan indicates the need for 15 additional classrooms at the high school and 15 classrooms at the elementary school within the next three years.

As of October 18, 2006, Jefferson City Schools' enrollment by grade level is:

Grade PreK – 5	1207	Jefferson Elementary School
Grade 6-8	558	Jefferson Middle School
Grade 9-12	663	Jefferson High School

## **Jefferson City Schools**

Jefferson City Schools is one of three school districts in Jackson County Georgia. This small, rural district is a fast growing system. The student population has increased 66% in the past six years. Currently, 36% of our students reside outside of our district. This number, however, is decreasing each year due to space limitations.

Maintaining high levels of graduation rates, reducing drop out rates, attracting quality teachers, maintaining good facilities, and ensuring adequate funding for local schools is an important component of economic development. Jefferson City Schools has historically had lower drop out rates than the state average (2% in FY06, FY05, and FY04 the state was at 5% for all three years).

## **The Community of Jefferson**

The rural city of Jefferson, population of approximately 4,400, is situated just outside of Atlanta off I-85 (55 miles) in Jackson County with a population of 52,500. The projected population of Jackson County is near 60,000 by 2010. Jackson County grew 25.7% from 2000-2005 which is well above the state average of 10.8%. Jackson County is the 7<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in the state. Jefferson is the county seat of Jackson with a population of 4,494.

Per capita income in Jackson County in 2003 was \$24,445. This figure is \$4,500 lower than the state average and \$7,027 lower than that of the nation. The Jefferson per capita income in 2006 is \$41,146.

The community offers many potential resources and strengths. The system is 2 miles off of I-85 giving quick access to Atlanta (south 50 miles) and to South Carolina (north 50 miles). The University of Georgia is 18 miles away in Athens and Georgia Technical Institute is 50 miles south in Atlanta. In addition, there are a dozen smaller colleges and technical colleges within an 80-miles radius of Jefferson (e.g., Piedmont College, Truett McConnell College, North Georgia College and University, Brenau College, Lanier Technical College, Athens Areas Technical College.)

## Jefferson City Schools' Students

In the district, the current enrollment consists of 4% Hispanic students, 79% percent Caucasian, 12% African-American, 2% Asian, and 2% multiracial students. The number of students served in the ESOL program has grown from 0 in FY99, to 14 in FY00, to 25 in FY01, to 22 in FY02, to 27 in FY03, to 26 in FY04, to 17 in FY05, to 18 in FY06, and now 33 in 2006-2007. Twenty-seven of those students are at Jefferson Elementary School.

Over the past 3 years, our population demographics have changed as shown in the attached bar graph.

24.20% percent of the students qualified for free and reduced priced meals in October 2005. The student population is comprised of students with six home languages other than English. These languages, in order of student enrollment, are Spanish (26), other Asian (6) Vietnamese (2), Chinese (2), Hindi (1), and Japanese (1).

Jefferson City Schools has several funded programs which focus on helping " at risk" students and the special needs of all students. This assistance is provided by having both during and after-school programs with specialized instruction. Jefferson City Schools also has a gifted and talented program for identified students (12%), English as a Second Language (ESOL) program (2%), and a migrant education program (2 students). A Special Education Program is offered for students who qualify in each school (13%). Over ninety percent of special education services are delivered in inclusion settings.

All classrooms meet the state class size requirements. Average class sizes in the district are:

Pre-Kindergarten:	20
Kindergarten:	20
1 <sup>st</sup> grade	18
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	20
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	18
4 <sup>th</sup> grade	22
5 <sup>th</sup> grade	22
6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade core classes	23
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade core classes	18

## Attendance and Mobility

Student attendance rates at Jefferson City Schools have remained steady over the past few years. Over 94% of the students in Jefferson City Schools have missed less than 15 days of school in 2005-2006. The average daily attendance (ADA) for the system is 97% for 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Enrollment numbers increase approximately 17% percent annually. There has been a 70% increase in the past six years.

## Jefferson City Schools Staff

The staff at Jefferson City Schools include: 142 regular teachers, 12 Early Intervention (EIP)/Title I teachers, 19 special education teachers, and one ESOL teacher. Of these teachers, 43 have gifted certification and 6 have ESOL certification. 24% of our teachers have less than 3 years of teaching experience. We have 53 new teachers this year. Most of the teachers, 45%, hold a master's degree, 39% have a master's degree and 16% hold a specialist's degree. There are 39 paraprofessional positions at Jefferson Elementary School, 6 at Jefferson Middle School, and 7 at Jefferson High School.

The number of years of teaching experience and degrees by grade level bands are shown below:

Grade Level	0-3 years experience	4-10 years experience	11-20 years experience	21+ years experience	TOTAL
<b>PreK-5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>90</b>
Bachelors	Bachelors: 18	Bachelors: 12	Bachelors: 4	Bachelors: 1	Bachelors: 35
Masters	Masters: 7	Masters: 18	Masters: 10	Masters: 6	Masters: 41
Specialist	Specialist: 0	Specialist: 7	Specialist: 6	Specialist: 1	Specialist: 14
<b>6-8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>40</b>
Bachelors	Bachelors: 8	Bachelors: 9	Bachelors: 3	Bachelors: 1	Bachelors: 21
Masters	Masters: 1	Masters: 9	Masters: 6	Masters: 0	Masters: 16
Specialist	Specialist: 0	Specialist: 0	Specialist: 3	Specialist: 0	Specialist: 3
<b>9-12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>42</b>
Bachelors	Bachelors: 2	Bachelors: 4	Bachelors: 3	Bachelors: 2	Bachelors: 11
Masters	Masters: 4	Masters: 8	Masters: 6	Masters: 3	Masters: 21
Specialist	Specialist: 0	Specialist: 2	Specialist: 3	Specialist: 5	Specialist: 10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>172</b>
Bachelors	Bachelors: 28	Bachelors: 25	Bachelors: 10	Bachelors: 4	Bachelors: 67
Masters	Masters: 12	Masters: 35	Masters: 22	Masters: 9	Masters: 78
Specialist	Specialist: 0	Specialist: 9	Specialist: 12	Specialist: 6	Specialist: 27

### **Additional personnel include:**

**Jefferson Elementary School:** principal, assistant principal, three instructional lead teachers, two counselors, one media specialist, one nurse, one secretary, one bookkeeper, two office clerks, six custodians, five food services workers.

**Jefferson Middle School:** principal, assistant principal, one and a half counselors, one media specialist, one secretary, one bookkeeper, one registrar, one half time nurse, four custodians, five food services workers.

**Jefferson High School:** principal, assistant principal, two and a half counselors, one media specialist, one secretary, one bookkeeper, one registrar, five custodians, and seven food services workers.

Thirteen bus drivers transport students for the system.

Other support personnel available to assist in meeting the needs of Jefferson City Schools' students include the half-time district psychologist, three speech and language specialists, student information specialist, and technology support specialist. Three district level secretaries, one financial officer, and one financial clerk.

### **Our District Leaders**

Our superintendent is Dr. John M. Jackson. He is in his 9<sup>th</sup> year as superintendent for Jefferson City Schools. He served as principal of Jefferson High School from 1983-1987. Other positions he has had include: assistant superintendent, middle and high school principal, adjunct professor, and teacher. The associate superintendent is Dr. Sherrie Gibney-Sherman. This is her fifth year in Jefferson City Schools. Past experiences include: elementary principal, curriculum and assessment director, grant writer, adjunct professor, consultant, and teacher.

There are two additional certificated staff in the central office, Ms. Donna McMullan who is in her second year as the director of middle and secondary instruction. This new position was created 2005-2006. Previous roles include teacher and assistant principal of Jefferson Middle School. Ms. Angela Vinson is the director of special education. She was a middle school language arts teachers and special education teacher.

## **Safety, Cleanliness, and Adequacy of School Facilities**

Jefferson City Schools is committed to having a safe and clean environment for learning. At the site level, there is an emergency preparedness plan; regular fire and emergency drills are held. Planning for various potential emergencies is done in coordination with regional agencies, with the district, and school plans stressing safety for the students first. At least one coordinated drill is held regionally in which the district participates. An updated Emergency Plan was reviewed and approved by GEMA in October 2006. All classrooms have a red flip chart which provides a quick emergency procedures reference information for staff.

Specific safety concerns regarding buildings and grounds at the school site are handled by the maintenance department if they cannot be remedied by site custodians or utility workers assigned to site duties. Our staff of 18 custodians perform basic cleaning operations in every classroom every day. The maintenance of all buildings is under the supervision of the newly created position in 2006-2007 of Grounds and Facilities Coordinator, Mr. Russell Massey.

Other aspects of the school/district safety program include:

- District safety committee
- Bus evacuation drills
- Fire safety inspections
- Lockdown drills

## **Classroom Discipline/Learning Climate**

Jefferson City Schools provides a disciplined, but stimulating, learning climate for students. The climate for learning at Jefferson City Schools is enhanced by involved parents. Parents are encouraged to become involved in school communities and councils, to help with homework, and to encourage and honor their child's successes. Student discipline is the responsibility of all Jefferson City Schools staff members.

A major goal is to provide a positive climate for learning in order to assure student achievement, enhance self-esteem, and develop positive social behavior. To reach this goal, Jefferson City Schools offers many opportunities for student participation and recognition.

Students are encouraged and expected to maintain appropriate behavior at all times because disruptions interfere with learning. Student handbooks and other



information about school and classroom rules are distributed and discussed on a regular basis.

Subject matter and courses are reviewed on a regular basis. Academic Standards have been developed in alignment with State Academic Standards and local needs. Parents are encouraged and welcomed to be active participants in the process.

### **Counseling and Other Student Support Services**

Students at Jefferson City School receive a high level of support services from an outstanding staff. There are two counselors at the elementary school, one and a half counselors at the middle school and one and a half counselors at the high school. JHS also has a new support position, a graduation coach who works with students who are at risk of not finishing high school.

### **After-School Programs**

Jefferson City Schools offers an after school program, PLUS, during the school year and summer months. Approximately 200 students are served each day. In addition, an after-school program offers students a variety of activities such as field trips, clubs, and special speakers.

The middle and high school offer after school tutoring for all students. Both schools offer athletic and academic clubs for students. These include: football, cross country, wrestling, tennis, cheerleading, golf, track, softball, baseball, academic bowl, literary meet, drama club, Total Person Program, student council, band, chorus, yearbook, Y-Club, Future Farmers of America (FFA), BETA, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA).