



Executive Summary

Dothan City Board of Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Description of the School System.....	2
System's Purpose.....	4
Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement.....	5
Additional Information	7

Introduction

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school system stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school system, and the kinds of programs and services that a school system implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school system with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the community will have a more complete picture of how the school system perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school system to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

Description of the School System

Describe the school system's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school system serves?

Dothan City Schools serve almost 9,334 students housed in 17 schools: eleven elementary schools, four middle schools and two high schools. The district also has a Pre-school/Head Start program that serves 397 students and an alternative school. Two of our eleven elementary schools, Heard and Montana Street, are magnet schools. Two of our middle schools, Beverlye and Caver, are magnet schools. The city is divided into two high school zones, Dothan High School and Northview High School. Feeder schools for Dothan High School are Cloverdale, Grandview, Heard Magnet, Hidden Lake, Selma Street, Beverlye Magnet and Honeysuckle Middle. Feeder schools for Northview High School are Jerry Lee Faine, Girard, Kelly Springs, Morris Slingsluff, Montana Street Magnet, Caver Magnet and Girard Middle. Students enrolled at Highlands Elementary are zoned for their feeder program based on the location of their residence.

The Northview High School campus also houses the Dothan Technology Center (DTC) that serves students from both high school campuses. Class offerings provide students with an array of rigorous coursework to help prepare them for advanced learning and a wide range of career opportunities. Career clusters offered by Dothan City schools include Architecture and Construction, Arts, Audio-Video Technology and Communication, Business Management and Administration, Health Science, Hospitality and Tourism, Human Services, Information Technology, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and Transportation, Distribution and Logistics.

PASS Academy, Providing Alternative Student Service, began in 2002. PASS Academy provides an alternative setting for students for academics and/or discipline reasons. Currently, students enrolled in grades K-12 may be placed at PASS Academy for 30 days upon recommendation from their base school principal for code of conduct violations. Administrative hearings are held to determine placement for students returning from juvenile facilities or for students receiving special education services. Students receive instruction in the core subjects from certified teachers. Middle and high school students are offered courses in science, social studies, English, Career Prep, and reading using the A+ Curriculum Software program.

Demographics:

Both Dothan High (DHS) and Northview (NHS) are School Wide Title I schools. The percent of students receiving free and reduced lunches at each school is: DHS 69%, NHS 56%.

Three of the four middle schools are School Wide Title I schools. The percent of students receiving free and reduced lunches at each school is: Beverlye Magnet 50%, Girard Middle 88%, Honeysuckle Middle 91%. Carver Magnet School is not a Title I school.

Eight of the eleven elementary schools are School Wide Title I schools. The percent of students receiving free and reduced lunches at each school is: Cloverdale 96%, Jerry Lee Faine 96%, Girard 88%, Grandview 98%, Hidden Lake 62%, Kelly Springs 62%, Morris Slingsluff 88%, and Selma St. 92%. Heard Magnet, Highlands and Montana Magnet are not Title I schools.

There are one hundred eighty-eight students in the District that are identified as English Language Learners. Eleven hundred and one (8%) of the district's students are identified as needing special education services. Dothan City Schools has a Pre-School/Head Start Program that serves 397 children. There are fifteen classes at the Head Start Center, two class at Jerry Lee Faine, one class at Morris Slingsluff, and four classes in schools throughout Houston County.

Executive Summary

Dothan City Board of Education

The enrollment for Dothan City Schools has remained steady over the last five years. The enrollment for the 2010-2011 year was 9,307 students compared to the enrollment of 9,334 students in 2015-2016. The average daily attendance for the school system is 95.75%.

The Dothan City Schools system employs 1163 people. There are 675 certified employees and 488 support staff employees. Of the certified employees, eight hold Doctorate degrees, 35 hold sixth year degrees, 336 hold Master's degrees and 296 hold Bachelor's degrees. All but eight teachers are Highly Qualified as outlined in No Child Left Behind. These eight teachers were new hires for the 2015-2016 school year and are waiting clearance from the State Department of Education. The system has eight teachers that are Nationally Board Certified.

Located in the southeastern part of Alabama, Houston County is in the heart of the state's Wiregrass region, which produces one fourth of the nation's peanuts, rightly earning it the title of Peanut Capitol of the World. Houston County was created by an act of the Alabama State Legislature on February 9, 1903, making it the newest of Alabama's 67 counties. Dothan is the largest city in Houston County and has served as the county seat since 1903.

Dothan is a growing city, with a population increase of about 20% over the past 15 years. In 2014, Dothan had 68,409 residents. 63.1% were white, 32.5% were African -American, 2.9% were Hispanic, and 1.1% were Asian. The high school diploma holder rate for those 25 and older is 85.3% and the percentage with a bachelor degree or higher was 23.6%, both slightly above the Alabama state averages. 18.7% of people in Dothan live below the poverty line, just above the state average.

Dothan City Schools is ranked as one of the top three employers in Houston County, ranking just behind the Southeast Alabama Medical Center and Flowers Hospital. Other large employers include the City of Dothan, Perdue Farms, Inc., a poultry processing plant, and Michelin Tire Corporation.

Dothan offers a number of recreational opportunities to visitors. Citizens of Dothan and its visitors enjoy nationally recognized sports facilities such as Westgate Park, Westgate Softball Complex, Westgate Tennis Center, and Rotary Miracle Field. Dothan is home to the Future Masters' Golf Tournament and to the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trails' Highlands Oaks as well as the annual host to the Southern Regional Karate Championships. Landmark Park is a 100-acre living history farmstead circa 1890s that was typical to this area. Each fall Dothan hosts the National Peanut Festival, paying tribute to the area's contribution to the peanut industry.

There are a number of other attractions in downtown Dothan. The Wiregrass Museum of Art features rotating exhibits of regional and national artists as well as a classroom/studio and a children's hands-on gallery. The downtown area offers motorists a pictorial history of the town through a number of colorful murals on various city buildings. The Dothan Opera House is an impressive Neoclassical Revival structure that dates from 1915. The Mule Marker in Poplar Head Park pays tribute to the animal that played a major role in the Wiregrass region's early development.

Dothan City Schools has partnered with Wiregrass Foundation, a grassroots community group, to develop a co-owned strategic plan for excellence for education. Education is a shared responsibility among students, parents, schools, and the community. This reform effort seeks to unite all stakeholders in the common goal of transforming Dothan City Schools into institutions that prepare our youth for education after high school and for the world of work in the 21st century.

System's Purpose

Provide the school system's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school system embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

The vision of the Dothan City School system is to challenge all students with an exciting, rigorous and relevant delivery of curricula designed to prepare them for the challenges they will face in the 21st Century global economy. This common vision is contained in the belief that all children matter and can learn rigorous and relevant 21st century information to improve their knowledge and skills.

The mission of the Dothan City Schools is to empower all students for the choices and challenges of the twenty-first century. We believe that we should teach students to respect themselves, others, and the environment; that we should teach students to participate productively and responsibly in a rapidly changing society; that we should teach them to communicate effectively; that we should teach them to use cooperative and independent learning strategies; that we should teach them to apply problem solving processes; and that we should teach them to set and meet high standards.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school system's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school system is striving to achieve in the next three years.

Academic progress for students in Dothan City Schools is based on local benchmark assessments that are administered three times during the year and state assessments, which are given once each year. Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is used to assess reading in Kindergarten through second grade. Grades Kindergarten through fifth are assessed in reading and math three times each year using a local benchmark measurement provided by CLASSWORKS. Grades six through twelve use a three time a year benchmark measurement provided by Global Scholar. Benchmark tests are given at regular intervals in all grade levels to help teachers assess learning and plan for instruction. Students in grades three through eight were administered the Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT) until the 2012-2013 school year. Beginning the 2013-2014 school year students in grades three through eight were assessed in reading, math, english, science, and writing using the ACT Aspire. Prior to July 2015, High school students were required to pass the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) to be eligible to graduate from a public high school in Alabama. In 2013-2014 ninth and tenth graders were required to take the ACT Quality Core End-of-Course exam which is no longer administered in Dothan. Beginning 2015 all eleventh graders are assessed on the ACT WorkKeys and ACT Plus Writing is administered to twelfth grade. Dothan City Schools has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) every year since 2004 except for the 2010-2011 school year. Currently our school system is not in School Improvement.

Three Dothan City Schools have been recognized at a National level over the last three years. In 2014 Beverlye Middle Magnet and Heard Elementary Magnet received the National Blue Ribbon Award, and in 2013 Morris Slingluff Elementary received the National Excellence in Urban Education Award. Out of 38 blue ribbon public schools in Alabama, Dothan City Schools have been recognized for three National Blue Ribbon Schools: Beverlye Middle Magnet (2014), Heard Elementary Magnet (2014), and Montana Magnet (2010).

The Dothan City Schools have been involved in Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation since Dothan High School was accredited on December 31, 1914. All schools in the District are accredited at this time. Below are strengths and weakness identified in the AdvancED accreditation process at the District:

A review of major trends and issues impacting the school system found the following:

1. A focused District Leadership Team
2. Strong site based leadership
3. Commitment to children
4. Data driven decision-making
5. Total immersion in school improvement
6. Instructional focus on reading, writing and math
7. Technology integration and 21st century classroom
8. Community engagement

Major strengths include:

1. Leadership that is committed to the district's vision and improvement efforts
2. Curriculum that is based on clear and measurable expectation for teaching and learning

Executive Summary

Dothan City Board of Education

3. Efficient use of resources to implement curriculum that enables students to achieve expectation for student learning
4. Commitment to a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns all functions of the system and its schools with the expectation for student learning

The needs include:

1. Securing stable, increased funding
2. Community awareness of the importance of education for all to the stability of the local economy
3. Meeting the needs of diverse populations
4. More effective communication with public
5. Continuous improvement for teaching and learning

As with all local school districts in Alabama, there is a need to restructure the way in which education is funded in the state. With local support of education at only the minimum of ten mills, Dothan City Schools continues to strive to provide the best education possible for those served in our city.

Additional Information

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

As of the 2012-2013 school year our Exceptional Student Services Department, as well as our Mental Health community leaders have developed a school based mental health program that provides on-site mental health service including preventative and crisis intervention. The Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Education have identified the need for a greater integration of mental health services in the public schools. There is an increasing concern about the growing number of children and adolescents who experience difficulties associated with the adverse effects of social and emotional disturbance. In school age children and adolescents, unmet mental health needs can cause negative and often times tragic long-term consequences. Those may include dropping out of school, substance abuse, a lack of vocational success, and inability to live and function independently. Individual student records are confidential and information is not shared with school staff without parent consent. All services will be provided in a quiet, private, and confidential space in each school. Neither students nor parents will be billed for care.