Forsyth County Schools

A safe, connected, and thriving community for all

Chestatee Elementary School

2023-2024

School Improvement Plan

Principal: Dr. Polly Tennies

School Mission/Vision Statement(s):

Vision: Responsible, Respectful, Problem Solvers Soaring to Success!

Mission: Together we encourage growth with a love of learning.

School Belief Statements:

Connect: We connect with families, students and staff. We help build positive relationships that facilitate learning.

Thrive and Collaborate: Every child can learn. Together we differentiate to meet students' needs. We help students love learning in our community.

Safe and Caring: We believe in a safe, caring learning environment, where teachers model expectations and we learn together.

Chestatee Elementary School
2023-2024 School Improvement Plan

FCS Goal Area: Social & Emotional Health

FCS Performance Objective C: Promote respect, wellness, and balance for staff and students

Major Focus: **Professional Development for staff on problem solving strategies, setting expectations, and self regulation to positively impact school climate for students and staff.**

Performance Measures:

- **Student and staff surveys Georgia Health Survey**
- **Attendance count for participants in program**
- **School wide calendar**

Action Steps

Semester #1 Action Steps	Semester #2 Action Steps
• Increase the number of staff attending Mindfulness 3-day training. • Ongoing staff training on the 4-step counseling model. • Provide PBIS Training on setting expectations for Tier 1 Interventions in the classroom. • Utilize daily class meetings to build connections.	• Increase the number of staff attending Mindfulness 3-day training. • Provide PBIS Teacher Leader support within the classroom for teachers who ask for problem solving partners. • Utilize daily class meetings to build connections.

Performance Measures: Year-End Results

2022-2023 (Baseline):

51/118 staff members have received training in Mindset. This is 43%

School wide calendar has time designated daily for class meetings at 15 minutes.

2023-2024:

School wide calendar increased time devoted daily to class meetings, now set to 25 minutes.

In the 2023-2024 school year, 31 additional Chestatee staff members the 3-day m received the mindfulness training. (83/115 staff members trained). This includes 3 administrators. This is 71% of staff trained.

Reflection on Results:

Connection is a priority for Chestatee. This is seen in the increased class meeting time on the school wide schedule. Staffing changes (transfers, new hires, retirees) impact the number of teachers trained in mindfulness, and Chestatee continues to find ways to commit to funding the 3-day mindfulness training. The PBIS Team met every month and leaders on this team provided support to their grade level. Monthly faculty meetings included training on Tier 1 and Tier 2 practices. Time in July preplanning and January preplanning strengthened PBIS classroom practices. The ETC was added to the PBIS team during the 2023-24 school year, which provided stronger technology support for PBIS resources, especially in Classlink resource organization.

Chestatee served as a district exemplar in a February exhibit training other schools, and was also featured in the National PBIS conference in Chicago as an exemplar. Teacher protocol on behavior support from trained peers offering solutions to student problem behaviors occurred throughout the school year. SPED Teachers also visited grade levels to teach the 4-step counseling model in the Fall. Verbal de escalation is recognized as a valuable tool. Ongoing support for behavior training was well received by the staff. Progress is seen on this goal. It continues to be a priority for the school community and a much needed support going forward.

Chestatee Elementary School
2023-2024 School Improvement Plan

FCS Goal Area: Climate, Culture, & Community

FCS Performance Objective B: Work collaboratively with all people to promote inclusivity, school pride, and belonging

Major Focus: **Provide an organized program, Game Changers, for all 5th grade students to lead and serve their school community through multiple opportunities on the campus, positively impacting the school, creating school pride and increasing the feeling of belonging.**

Performance Measures:

- **Student and Staff Surveys**
- **Discipline Data**
- **Georgia Student Health Surveys**

Action Steps

Semester #1 Action Steps	Semester #2 Action Steps
• Participate in 4th Grade classroom visitations (May 2023). • Organize placement of 5th grade classrooms throughout the school. • Conduct a kickoff Game Changers Assembly with EFHS Band to introduce the opportunities. • Organize a Steering Committee with Staff. • Collect Pre-Program Surveys. • Organization opportunities for students.	• Organize a steering committee for students. • Provide ongoing opportunities for students. • Collect post surveys. • Award recognition shirts for participating.

Performance Measures: Year-End Results

(Include sub-group data where applicable)

2022-2023 (Baseline):

Discipline data report shows an increase of reportable offenses. Increase of 179% from 21-22. Fifth grade being the subgroup with most reportable data. Loss of Distinguished rating to Operational Rating in PBIS classification.
2022-2023.....47 events (majors)

2023-2024:

Decreasing discipline data is the goal.
2023-2024.....35 events (majors)
Added a student advisory board

Reflection on Results:

Prior to the 2023-2024 school year, ADMIN saw vandalism in the bathrooms and issues with disrespect from older CHES students. Behavior was startling, and showed very middle school like issues within an elementary school setting. ADMIN were challenged by the 4th and 5th grade classes and strived for a reset on their purpose and sense of belonging. *Game Changers was born from frustration*. All students in the 5th grade class would now have

opportunities to lead and serve. Fifth Graders became the big brothers and sisters of Chestatee, the role models of our school, and would be expected to connect positively by taking positions that emphasized their passions and skills within the school. Prior to this school year, we had a limited volunteer program, modeled from CHATT ELEM, called I Changers, it existed by application only, and about 30 kids participated with great results. The participants always felt valued for their work and connected to the school.

At the end of the school year, in May, classroom visits occurred in 4th grade to discuss the new program, the opportunities that would exist, and to solicit the name for the program. It built excitement for the next year. A surprise pep rally kicked off the main event in the 2023-2024 school year. Game Changers then took leadership roles at appropriate times around the school, in classrooms, in pathways, at recess, in multiple locations providing their time to making a difference. Community grew. Confidence grew for students. Parents were ecstatic and commented on the stories that came home about the impact of volunteering and how that positively influenced their children. After the first experience doing a Game Changer segment, the 5th grader would earn their free Game Changer shirt. Many 5th graders racked up experiences throughout the school year in many places. It was even possible to use a time during an extra pathway special created just for 5th grade in the media center.

Teachers all over Chestatee could request Game Changer participation in their classroom by using a Google Document. Strong communication structures had to be established and coordination of procedures had to be established so the service would not be a burden or interfere with important academic times. Part of the success included having a steering committee of adults and also a steering committee of students who provided key input.

Another critical step in diffusing behavior was moving the clump of 5th graders throughout the school so that the access to being a positive role model and leading for the entire school would be possible. At first this step was met with skepticism, but after the first few weeks was embraced. The impact seen for support was tremendous. Going forward, it has been determined that less spread is critical for teamwork not to be impacted for 5th grade classroom teachers.

This year has shown that Game Changers made a significant impact on the climate and culture of 5th grade. This is also seen with a decrease in threat assessments and suicidal ideations for 5th graders. Specifically with this group prior to 5th grade, it was noted to be one of the largest collections of data we had ever received. The overall mental health improves when a purpose of serving others was established. Giving your time to lead and serve makes you feel like you belong and your purpose is secure in your school community. We have started to see the program take root in other locations as well. Chestatee is looking forward to continuing the use of Game Changers next year at the school and making further improvements with connecting students to lead and serve. I would like to see more formalized collection of data. We have had 100% of 5th graders participate, including our students with EBI self contained homerooms. I would like to count the number of volunteer hours gained at the school.

When a bunch of 5th graders met the new Little Mill Middle School Principal, Molly Lavin, one of the questions asked was "What opportunities do you have for us to lead and serve? Because you know, we are Game Changers." Molly said she will have to get ready for this group from Chestatee, because they are poised to make a difference.

Chestatee Elementary School
2023-2024 School Improvement Plan

FCS Goal Area: The Learner Experience

FCS Performance Objective A: Increase Student Achievement

Major Focus: **Faculty will participate in professional learning opportunities, instructional coaching, and curriculum implementation in order to improve student achievement in math and literacy.**

Performance Measures:

- **PLC Schedule**
- **GMAS Sores in ELA and Math**
- **LIT Team and Coaching training schedule**

Action Steps

Semester #1 Action Steps	Semester #2 Action Steps
• Utilize PLC Model to provide collaboration time for teachers that is designated on the schoolwide calendar. • Organize a large meeting space that invites participation through the placement of materials and resources. • Create opportunities for the LIT Team (Lead Instructional Team) to attend additional training for Eureka and UFLI. Redelivery is crucial. • Provide Instructional Coaches during PLC meetings to support the work of the staff.	• Continue with steps from Semester 1. • Evaluate progress mid year for correction. • Conduct end of year evaluation of the PLC process to find opportunities for the new year.

Performance Measures: Year-End Results

(Include data for the school and each sub-group)

2022-2023 (Baseline):

GMAS ELA 40.5 (% of Level 3 & 4)

GMAS Math 51.2%

PLC calendar indicates learning opportunities for all staff members.

2023-2024:

GMAS ELA - 40.4% (% of Level 3 and 4)

GMAS Math- Unavailable

PLC Calendar began the second week of August with a weekly meeting facilitated by LIT team member in partnership with the ETC and Instructional Coach. This occurred weekly till the last week of April.

Reflection on Results:

Creating an expectation to function together for Professional Learning Communities was a key step in the way professional learning was conducted at Chestatee. For the 2023-2024 school year, the principal partnered with the Instructional coach and ETC to help establish a vision for learning distinguishing between professional development and collaborative Professional Learning Communities. This was indeed a challenge for some groups who were unaware of two ways of operating. A necessary step was to empower teacher leaders in the work and to utilize their skills to guide the teams.

Two Leaders on each grade team were identified to help with running the Professional Learning Communities. These 12 teachers received additional training from the county, as well as a monthly support meeting in the morning, from

7- 8am run by our Coach and ETC designed to assist with running the PLC for the grade level. Building the expertise of the team was a positive step instructionally. A big focus was setting the agenda and working hard to establish the true work of a PLC. One of the biggest challenges for the year was the number of new curriculum changes that occurred for teachers. ItsLearning was replaced with Canvas. Eureka was now a part of the math line up and the building blocks for phonics and phonemic awareness were just being established with Heggerty and UFLI. Many teachers would have preferred a solidly PD approach which was how we had done business in the past.

To go along with a new way of doing business we had a new location, the Collaboration Corner. It was comfortable and invited discussion. We partnered with the District Office, especially John Strang and Alena Zink on observing and mentoring our work. A key moment for us was being asked to share at the professional learning leaders training on establishing a climate and culture. Although ours was not perfect, what it was at the time was headed in the right direction, and importantly, the 3 leaders, Coach, ETC, and Principal were aligned in our expectations for the year.

We realized mid-year that we did need to give some PD time as we moved towards the PLC model, if our teachers expressed their needs were for understanding the tools of the curriculum they had at their disposal. There was a conscious discussion that we would respond to what our teachers were telling us with the goal to always move forward to creating a Professional Learning Community.

ARTIFACTS:

- Lead Instructional Team 2023
- *Chestatee 23-24 School Calendar

Chestatee Elementary School
2023-2024 School Improvement Plan

FCS Goal Area: The Learner Experience

FCS Performance Objective A: Increase student growth

Major Focus: Improve student ability to score proficient in writing tasks.
Performance Measures:

- Access Writing Score
- GMAS Writing Scores
- School Based Writing Assessment

Action Steps

Semester #1 Action Steps	Semester #2 Action Steps
• Utilize MTSS block for additional writing segments. • School wide writing prompt, 3X a year. • Collaborative writing performance review. • Planned collaboration with ELL Coach. • Typing program used in Computer Science to target student ability to write online.	• School wide writing prompt continued. • Participate in the Young Author Competition. • PLC includes writing discussion and how to use writing in weekly assignments within the classroom.

Performance Measures: Year-End Results

(Include data for the school and each sub-group)

2022-2023 (Baseline):
Access writing score scale average 275.5
GMAS writing remediate 52.6%

2023-2024:
Access writing score scale average 279 (a gain of 3.5)
GMAS writing remediation indicator identified at 49.2% (a positive trend of 3.4%)

Reflection on Results:

Working on writing took on a significance in the 2023-24 school year due to the writing remediation indicator on GMAS showing over half of CHES students needed help in this area. Instituting school wide writing prompts three times a year, collaborative conversations about student work, and PLC discussions helped build capacity in this instructional area.

Several key steps helped build a strong foundation instructionally for improvements in writing.

- Including writing groups within the MTSS block on each grade level.
- Letting grade levels select the times for the writing prompt to occur for their team.
- Using the direction guidelines released by the state for intermediate level writers.

- Working in collaboration with the ELL Coach assigned to our cluster to visit ELL cluster classrooms in 3rd grade to model lessons every month.
- Funding a typing program for the computer science pathway to assist students with developing stamina for online writing.

With these steps, progress in the area of writing was seen in the school, but of course more work still needs to be done. Working on writing is a priority and represents synthesis, and higher-order creation skills. The impact of focus here will improve ELA scores overall as well.