

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Accreditation Study for Bartow County Schools

BEFORE

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?

The earliest evidence of human occupation of the Cartersville, Georgia area is the Paleo-Indian Period (10,000 BC). The first historic documentation came in 1540 with DeSoto's account of the culture at the Etowah Indian Mounds, which is now a state historic site and public attraction.

The State of Georgia usurped Cherokee lands and created 10 counties, one of which was Cass. The county was so named in honor of General Lewis Cass, who was born in New Hampshire and served at the time as Secretary of War under President Andrew Jackson, the man most responsible for the removal of the Cherokee Indians from northwest Georgia. The county seat was Cassville. The town was home to two colleges and was the site of Georgia's first Supreme Court decision in 1846.

After the destruction of Cassville by the forces of General Sherman in 1864 the county seat was changed to Cartersville, then a small, thriving town on the Etowah River. Cartersville was named for Farrish Carter, Esq., perhaps the wealthiest land owner in the State during the ante-bellum period. The town was incorporated by an Act of Legislature approved February 5, 1850. The Civil War brought many changes to Cass County the least of which was a new name. In the Georgia Secession Convention of 1861, Cass County's three delegates voted against secession. When the state voted to leave the Union, the county not only sent their men to volunteer, but also decided on a new county name. The name Bartow County was chosen in honor of Francis Bartow, a Confederate General killed in the First Battle of Manassas. Prior to the Civil War, Bartow was an attorney in Savannah who had represented many prominent Cass County citizens who moved here from Savannah.

Attracted by abundant natural resources and the promise of gold, white settlers acquired land through the 1832 gold lottery. The county seat of Cassville was laid out the next year and incorporated in December 1843. It was destroyed during the Civil War by Union forces in November 1864, and the county seat was moved to Cartersville, the next largest municipality, in 1867. Other municipalities include Adairsville, Emerson, Euharlee, Kingston, Taylorsville and White.

The Western and Atlantic Railroad (W&A), which paralleled present-day Interstate 75 from Atlanta to Chattanooga, Tennessee, played a significant role in the early development of the county. During the Civil War, the W&A was the Confederacy's main corridor through northwest Georgia and was of some strategic value during Union general William T. Sherman's campaign for Atlanta. One of the shortest and bloodiest battles of the war was waged at the deep cut of the railroad at Allatoona Pass. The W&A also figured prominently in the Great Locomotive Chase (also known as the Andrews Raid), which ran through Bartow County.

Major industries include Shaw Industries and Anheuser-Busch. Bartow County also serves as the corporate headquarters for Phoenix Air. Until the mid-1970s cotton remained the main crop in this largely agricultural county.

Bartow County is home to Red Top Mountain State Park and Lake Allatoona, which occupy a large portion of the southeast corner of the county. The first African American state park, George Washington Carver, was located in Bartow, it became part of Red Top Park in 1975. Historical attractions include nineteen National Register listings, among them Adairsville Historic District, Etowah Valley District, and the North Erwin Street and North Wall Street Historic Districts in Cartersville.

The county boasts the first outdoor Coca-Cola wall sign, the Euharlee Covered Bridge, and the Friendship Monument in Cartersville. Cultural attractions include museums, performing arts centers, and theatrical companies. Bartow County also hosts the annual Atlanta Steeplechase at Kingston Downs. A campus of Chattahoochee Technical College and a satellite campus for Georgia Highlands College are located in the county.

Notable people from Bartow County include the evangelist Sam Jones, humorist Bill Arp, novelists Corra Harris and Francis Goulding, Baptist missionary Lottie Moon, iron pioneers Jacob Stroup and Moses Stroup, iron industrialist Mark Cooper, major league baseball player Rudy York, Hall of Fame horse trainer Huratio Luro, and Confederate generals P.M.B. Young and William Wofford. Distinguished politicians include the first woman U.S. Senator, Rebecca Latimer Felton; Senator Jefferson Davis; U.S. Attorney General, Amos T. Akerman; former chief justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, Robert Benham; former governor Joe Frank Harris; U.S. Congressman William Felton; and member of the Confederate Congress, Warren Akin, Sr.

According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population of Bartow County is 100,157, an increase from the 2000 population of 76,019. As the metropolitan Atlanta area expands, Bartow County's continued growth is assured.

As of the census of 2010, there were 100,157 people with 38,598 households residing in the county. Of the total number of households, 25.9% had children under the age of 18 living with them. The county's population was distributed by age as follows: 6.7% under the age of 5, 25.9% under the age of 18, 11.8% over the age of 65, and 55.65 between 18 and 65. The population increased from 2009 to 2010 by 9.69%. The racial makeup of the county was 86.2% White, 10.5% African American, 9% Asian, .5% American Indian and Alaska Native, .1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 1.8% multiracial, and 7.8% Hispanic or Latino. The estimated median income for a household in the county was \$49,543 compared to the Georgia median of \$49,604. About 14.9% of people in Bartow County are below the poverty level, which is about 14,000 people actually living below the poverty rate. It increases by 1000 people from 2009 to 2010.

Bartow County School System (BCSS) consists of 12 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 3 high schools. Bartow County also has recently added Bartow College and Career Academy which is a program providing educational opportunities for high school students to ensure a viable 21st Century workforce for Bartow County and the surrounding areas. The system serves 14,062 students in grades Pre-K through 12. The mid-level experienced teachers (between 3 and 20 yrs.) for Bartow County Schools is 75.2% and the average teaching experience (years) is 13:1. We have been able to maintain class size to meet instructional needs of students. However, Bartow County does have an approved state waiver for class size due to continued funding reductions.

Retention rate for teachers in Bartow County is 84.7%. This percentage is an increase from the previous year. All elementary and middle schools are Title I schools. Bartow County has maintained for the past several years 100% HiQ (highly qualified) for teachers and paraprofessionals.

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.

Bartow County School System's Vision, Mission, Beliefs, and Goals were originally developed in 2004 by the System Design Team. These statements were revisited again in 2008 by a team of certified and classified staff members from across the system. In March of 2014, all stakeholders were surveyed concerning Bartow County's Vision, Mission, Beliefs and Goals. The results were overwhelming to continue with each. The commitment statement which was added in 2008 is "Graduation and Beyond . . . Creating Lifelong Learners."

Bartow County Vision Statement:

The vision of the Bartow County School System is to provide all students a world-class education focused on high academic standards and dedicated to creating lifelong learners who will become contributing members in a global society.

Bartow County Mission Statement:

The mission of the Bartow County School System is to educate all students to understand the past, learn in the present, and flourish in the future as lifelong learners.

Bartow County School System Beliefs:

We believe we have the responsibility to educate each student academically, physically, socially, and emotionally.
We believe we have the responsibility to provide a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment.
We believe we must develop each student's potential to succeed in a global society.
We believe we must hold high expectations that promote excellence.
We believe the education of the student is most successful when it involves the school, home, and community.
We believe learning is a lifelong process.

Bartow County Goals:

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:

Content Mastery

- *Provide Engaging High-Quality Differentiated Instruction that is Aligned with the State Standards
- *Implement a Balanced Assessment Approach to Include Diagnostic, Formative, and Summative Assessments to Design and Adjust Instruction to Maximize Student Achievement
- *Measure and Monitor Achievement Growth for all Students

Post (Elementary, Middle, & High) School Readiness

- *Increase Post Elementary, Middle and High School Readiness
- *Provide Intervention Support Based on Identified Needs/Data-Analysis

Improve Graduation Rate and Reduce Drop-Out Rate

- *Increase the Number of Students Achieving Advanced Academic Credits
- *Increase/Support College and Career Readiness for All Students
- *Provide Alternative Opportunities for Students to Earn Carnegie Units Toward Graduation

Integrate Technology throughout Learning

- *Integrate Technology into Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment to Improve Student Achievement

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS:

Increase Parent Engagement

- *Develop and Deliver Communications to Parents and Families on the Factors that Influence Student Achievement and Success
- *Increase Community Engagement
- *Create New and Strengthen on-going Collaborative Community Partnerships
- *Strengthen Trust and Transparency between the School System and It's Stakeholders

Increase Student Engagement

- *Engage Students in the Vision of Graduation and Beyond and the Educational Process

Increase Staff Engagement

- *Educate ALL Staff to Understand the Social, Economic, and Cultural Diversity of the Community
- *Engage Staff in the Support of Students and the Community
- *Inspire and Motivate staff to Positively Influence the Lives of Students

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:

Recruit, Retain, and Develop a Competent and Accountable Workforce

- *Encourage Attainment of Endorsement & Higher Degrees
- *Ensure Hiring and Allocation Processes Support Highly Qualified Expectations
- *Increase Teacher/Staff Retention Rate
- *Increase Teacher/Leader Effectiveness Through the Implementation of Teacher/Leader Evaluation System
- *Acquire Personnel that Support the Development of 21st Century Bartow County Workforce to Meet the Needs of Business and Industry

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

- *Increase Safety and Security of Facilities
- *Decrease Accidents for ALL stakeholders Within the School System

*Improve Facility and Student Safety
Ensure Appropriate Maintenance of All School System Facilities

Ensure Effective Administrative Processes

*Improve Response Time

Increase Effectiveness/Efficiency of Administrative Processes and Procedures

Provide Efficient/Effective Student Support Services and Resources

*Improve Meal Participation

*Improve Student Wellness

*Maintain and Support Campus Police Department

*Provide Safe and Secure Transportation

*Provide and Maintain Adequate Facilities for Student Growth

Provide Fiscal Responsibility

*Ensure Efficient Fiscal Management Processes are Utilized to Maintain and Grow Positive Financial Stability for the School System

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Increase Use of Digital Pathways to Improve Administrative Efficiencies with District and School Level

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.

Bartow County as a whole will benefit from the success of the school system. Bartow County is proud of the achievements and improvement through the years. Bartow County Schools and local employers have experienced a long history of partnership. This partnership has never been more relevant than now based on the current movement in education and need for a highly qualified and skilled workforce. The Bartow County College and Career Academy (BCCCA) is a joint venture between the community, K-12 education, post-secondary education, business and

industry to ensure a viable workforce and continued opportunities for the students of Bartow County. The fall of 2014, Bartow County College and Career Academy saw a doubling in their classes. Bartow County School System (BCSS) students earning the Georgia Student Service Award worked over 3,700 hours in community service during the 2013-2014 school year. The goal this year is for every student to complete a minimum of ten hours of community service.

Housed at Bartow County College and Career Academy, is Bartow Virtual Academy which has seats for twenty-five students. The Virtual Academy allows students to work from home and parents can acquire daily a student's progress in terms of completing course work and time spent on course work. It also allows students and parents to find what class options work best for the individual situation, letting students complete their work while still being a student at their school of origin. This program has resulted in multiple students graduating from high school who may have not had the opportunity. It is the goal of the Virtual Academy to meet students where they are and help them reach their goals.

During the summer of 2014, nineteen Bartow County School System teachers have spent a week of their summer working at the Cartersville Medical Center, ZEP, Shaw Industries and Georgia Power. They experienced first-hand experience and knowledge of how today's business environment is evolving. The Teacher Externship Program was an opportunity for industry leaders and teachers to work together in an effort to bring 'real life' learning to the students in Bartow County schools. Teachers performed on-the-job tasks for the companies. Treated like employees, they had to clock in and out, received 30 minute lunches and work in the work environment of all other employees. Lessons developed by the participants will be implemented in classrooms and shared with their peers.

In 2012, Bartow County Schools was awarded 4.1 million in Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grants, Nine schools as well as the Pre-Kindergarten program were funded through the grants. This sizable sum provided for literacy through technology upgrades, which included laptop computers for students and teachers, as well as more interactive technology in the schools, such as interactive projectors.

January 4 of 2012, the New Cass High School opened its doors to students. The school was built on a 168-acre property on Cass-White Road in White, GA behind White Elementary. The school replaced the current Cass High off Grassdale Road. Cass High School's history began nearly five decades earlier, as the first Cass High was established in 1931. In the fall of 2012 the new \$13 million, 108,000 square foot Cloverleaf Elementary School opened with an emphasis on technology. Adairsville Middle School (AMS) opened in the fall of 2013 as the replacement school for the former AMS. All students were issued electronic textbooks on their laptops. AMS does not have general lockers.

In August of 2014, the 88,000 square-foot Emerson Elementary opened for students. Four hundred forty students enrolled to attend Emerson this school year, but the facility will service 750 students.

Bartow County Advanced Placement (AP) students at Woodland High School (WHS) scored 38% higher than the national average on the Environmental Science Test. This equals 82.5% of the students passing the exam. Also, 100% of their students passed in AP Spanish, AP Statistics and AP Studio Art. Adairsville High School (AHS) students exceeded the state averages in Calculus, English/Language Composition, English/Literature Composition, Macroeconomics, Psychology, Spanish and U.S. History. Since 2010, AHS has seen an increase in AP students receiving a three or higher from 45.2% to 71.8% in 2014. Students wishing to take the AP exam at AHS have risen from 84 students to 117 students. They also have seen an increase in the number of AP subject exams given from 103 exams to 207 exams. The middle school CRCT scores reflect a 3% increase in Social Studies.

Adairsville Middle School was able to provide a laptop for every student. Not only did their computer skills increase but student engagement noticeably increased. Teachers placed notes on Blackboard. Utilizing the abundance of technology, student retention improved. Students were able to download documents and refer back to videos when they were absent. The technology is saving time and money on copying assignments. Woodland High School has increased their scores in the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). CCRPI is a comprehensive state measure of school improvement and accountability, including the promotion of college and career readiness. From 2012 to 2013, the measure increased over twelve points. While we observe this growth at one of our three high schools, the other two high schools have challenges to increase the CCRPI scores.

Woodland High School has also been recognized by the state for its dedication to excellence. In addition to being named a Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) AP school for the past several years for the number of students taking math and science AP courses, WHS is also pursuing accreditation from the Georgia Department of Education as a STEM certified program in an effort to provide a solid foundation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Woodland's Early Childhood Education, Business, and Graphic Arts programs have received a coveted stamp of excellence.

The Army JROTC unit at Adairsville High School received a victory in November, 2014 to add to their many awards. Forty of their students made the Raider Team at competition in Molena, Georgia. In addition Emily Sexauer defeated 35 of the best female Raiders in the country to crown the Ultimate Raider for the third year in a row, a feat never previously accomplished. Justin Gates, competition director of Sports Network International, has been involved with the national event for 14 years. He said, "Emily is possibly the best female Raider to ever compete. Her accomplishment of being named three-time Ultimate Raider has never been done by anyone, male or female." She believes her accomplishments will help her be successful at West Point.

Students in Bartow County Schools have an opportunity to receive a Microsoft IT Certification through Microsoft's IT Academy. This program is synced with the business curriculum at the local high school. It offers classroom and online learning, hands-on labs, access to hundreds of courses, books, cutting-edge resources and collaboration tools. Students learn computer basics, computer safety privacy and security, the internet and World Wide Web, Windows 7 and Microsoft 2010. As students finish levels in their business classes, they take on-line tests for the Microsoft Certification.

This program is an initiative with the Georgia Department of Education and Microsoft. Bartow County Schools ranks as one of the top five districts in the state with the most students taking and passing the Microsoft Certification. This past July, Bartow County School System Transportation Department was awarded the Georgia Diesel Emissions Reduction (GaDER) Gold Award by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. The Gold Award is awarded to school systems that have reduced emissions in 26 - 74%

of their school bus fleet through: early replacement, installation of emissions control equipment and/or the use of alternative fuels. The GaDER School Bus Program assists Georgia school systems by offering grants, technical assistance and education. This award further shows the commitment our county has made to improve the environment of the communities we serve.

In past years, Bartow County Schools have had a number of Title I schools recognized as "Distinguished Schools." In 2011, eleven schools held the recognition. Georgia then moved to a "Reward Schools" recognition for 'Highest Performing' and 'Highest Progress.' Taylorsville Elementary has claimed the 'Highest Performing' recognition consecutively for three years. In 2014, Adairsville Elementary was recognized as a "Reward School" for 'Highest Progress.'

Technology implementation in education continues to advance and change and can seem overwhelming at times when trying to keep up with best practices. Bartow County has experienced an influx of new technology to help students and teachers have greater access to resources, content, and differentiation inside and outside the classroom. These resources and the continuing task of preparing our students for their professional careers led to the creation of Instructional Technology Support positions in the Bartow County School System.

The Instructional Technology Support position/s is based on teacher and student support. In a typical month the Instructional Technologist can meet with schools K-12 and provide training for the faculty and staff on the many technologies available. Trainings range from, but are not limited to, use of our Learning Management System (LMS) - Blackboard, Interactive Boards and components, Document Cameras, and Online Resources. During this time, support is also provided in the classroom setting. Resources are provided to meet standards with technology, as well as teaming with the classroom teacher in the classroom setting to model and provide instructions to the students and teacher to use and implement in the future.

There are certainly challenges and areas of improvement for Bartow County. One such challenge is operating with reduced funds while working to implement the increasing number of mandates. Georgia Department of Education is now using the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) for statewide accountability. We are better understanding how this system works but continue to see updates and adjustments. An additional challenge has been the movement from Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). Bartow County has provided professional learning to ensure a clear understanding of the changes.

Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) continues to be an area that is challenging with the additional investment of time that must be allocated for the requirements. Additionally, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) had to be developed and administered to students where there was not a required standardized test (CRCT or EOCT).

Now in addition to the above mandates, the state of Georgia is in the process of developing new assessments - Georgia Milestones EOC and EOG. The new assessments will enable educators to deepen their understanding on students progress from one grade to the next – and just as importantly, identify any gaps in progress so they can address them well before students enter college and the workforce. As we move forward, this will be an area to target for maintaining high student achievement.

In addition, Bartow County continues to address student achievement in all areas. We are specifically looking to improve all of our high school graduation rates. Using data to provide intervention to students who are struggling and increasing the number of students who are graduating and moving into college or the work force.

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 Bartow County Schools worked through the process for AdvancED, our strategic plan and school improvement plans were aligned to the five AdvancEd standards. We also ensured that our mission, vision, motto, and beliefs are supported by the work.

Bartow County schools are driven by the mission, vision and beliefs stated previously. Students in Bartow County are provided with many opportunities to grow and excel academically and socially. Academically, the students in Bartow County have access to programs through gifted education, Advanced Placement, Honors, remedial education, Early Intervention Program, alternative education, built in remediation and enrichment, English Speakers of Other Languages, CTAE pathways, Special Education, and Title I.

The Bartow Education Foundation, a non-profit organization, was established to provide additional support for the Bartow County School System, its employees and most important of all, its students.

The Bartow County Education Foundation exists to:

- *Reward innovation in the classroom through teacher grants
- *Reward innovation in the schools through employee grants
- *Recognize exemplary performance in system employees through the Teacher of the Year program and the Employee of the Month Recognition program
- *Build community and business relationships
- *Seek support and resources essential to the success of public education
- *Provide professional development opportunities for the Bartow County School System

The mission statement of the Bartow County Education Foundation is to support the Bartow County School System in providing world-class educational opportunities for its students and teaching community.

Executive Summary

Bartow County School System

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Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Accreditation
Study for Bartow County Schools

AFTER



Executive Summary

Bartow County School System

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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?

Bartow County has a rich and varied history which provides a fertile foundation for education. The earliest evidence of human occupation of the Cartersville, Georgia, area is the Paleo-Indian Period (10,000 BC). Later, a Mississippian culture, known as Mound Builders, thrived from 900-1500 CE. The first historic documentation came in 1540 with DeSoto's account of the culture at the Etowah Indian Mounds, which is now a state historic site and public attraction. In 1832 State of Georgia usurped Cherokee lands and created 10 counties, one of which was Cass, whose county seat was Cassville. The town was home to two colleges but was destroyed by General Sherman in 1864, and the county seat was moved to Cartersville, then a small, thriving town on the Etowah River. The Civil War also brought a name change to the county, becoming Bartow after a Confederate war general.

Present day Bartow County boasts many advantages for a growing, well-educated community. Transportation in the form of Western and Atlantic Railroad (W&A), which parallels present-day Interstate 75 from Atlanta to Chattanooga, Tennessee, played a significant role in the early development of the county from the Great Locomotive Chase during the Civil War to one of the most important arteries in the state network of roads within an hour's travel to Atlanta. It is one of the reasons for corporate locations including Shaw Industries, Anheuser-Busch, and Phoenix Air in Bartow County, still with a sizable agricultural base, and why the Atlanta Steeple Chase and Lake Point development located here. Abundant minerals and natural resources, including Lake Allatoona, attract both industries and tourists, who often relocate. The county now hosts educational facilities trending toward its cultural and educational growth, with campuses of Chattahoochee Technical College, Georgia Highlands College, and Bartow County College and Career Academy. (Parker, Chantal. "Bartow County." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 30 April 2013. Web. 09 June 2014.)

As the metropolitan Atlanta area expands, Bartow County's continued growth is assured. With a population increase of 24% since the 2000, the 2010 U.S. census claimed the number at 100,157, with 38,598 households residing in the county. Of the total number of households, 25.9% had children under the age of 18 living with them. The county's population was distributed by age as follows: 6.7% under the age of 5, 25.9% under the age of 18, 11.8% over the age of 65, and 55.65 between 18 and 65. The racial makeup of the county was 86.2% White, 10.5% African American, 9% Asian, 7.8% Hispanic or Latino, .5% American Indian and Alaska Native, .1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 1.8% multiracial. The estimated median income for a household in the county was \$49,543 compared to the Georgia median of \$49,604. About 14.9% people in Bartow County are below the poverty level, which is about 14,000 people actually living in poverty. This statistic impacts education as much as any other factor and poses one of Bartow County School's most significant challenges, since all elementary and middle schools are Title I schools.

Bartow County School System (BCSS) consists of 12 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 3 high schools. BCSS also has recently added Bartow County College and Career Academy, which is a program providing academic and career as well as college educational opportunities for high school students to ensure a viable 21st century workforce for Bartow County and the surrounding areas. The system serves 14,062 students in grades Pre-K through 12. There are 411 teachers and administrators with master's degrees, 299 with specialist degrees, and 38 with doctorate degrees, 249 employees with 20 or more years of experience. The teacher retention rate is 84.7%.

Executive Summary

Bartow County School System

In addition to the challenge of educating many students in the economically disadvantaged category, BCSS faces other challenges. Because of state reductions in allotted educational funds, the system was forced to institute furlough days for certified staff, resulting in a lack of planning days for teachers. This state reduction in funds was also detrimental to system operations as well as to restoring personnel to an adequate level of support, with media specialists and paraprofessionals as just one example. Financial challenges remain for the system to reinstate furlough days to all personnel, which would undoubtedly positively affect morale.

While the BCSS Strategic Plan and Implementation outlines numerous steps to accomplish higher graduation and lower drop out rates and much progress has been made, more can be done to meet the needs of all students so that they will graduate from high school and further their development as citizens of the world. This includes, but is not limited to, continued support of dual enrollment, expanded opportunities for credit attainment through the BCSS Virtual School, and establishing an after hours school program to increase the graduation rate. The system's primary focus being student achievement, the BCSS goal is to increase the number of students who graduate and improve student achievement in order to exceed the state average scores in all areas.

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- *Create new and strengthen on-going collaborative community partnerships
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OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

- *Increase safety and security of facilities
- *Decrease accidents for ALL stakeholders within the school system
- *Improve facility and student safety
- *Ensure appropriate maintenance of all school system facilities

Ensure Effective Administrative Processes

- *Improve response time
- *Increase effectiveness/efficiency of administrative processes and procedures

Provide Efficient/Effective Student Support Services and Resources

- *Improve meal participation
- *Improve student wellness
- *Maintain and support campus police department
- *Provide safe and secure transportation
- *Provide and maintain adequate facilities for student growth

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Bartow County School System

Provide Fiscal Responsibility

*Ensure efficient fiscal management processes are utilized to maintain and grow positive financial stability for the school system

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Increase use of digital pathways to improve administrative efficiencies with district and school level

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Bartow County School System

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.

A shining achievement of the Bartow County School System is its long history of partnership with local employers. This partnership has never been more relevant than now, based on the current movement in education and need for a highly qualified and skilled workforce. To this end, in 2013 BCSS established the Bartow County College and Career Academy, a joint venture between the community, K-12 education, post-secondary education, business, and industry to ensure a viable workforce and continued opportunities for the students of Bartow County. In the first year, College and Career Academy students earning the Georgia Student Service Award worked over 3,700 hours in community service. The goal this year is for every student to complete a minimum of ten hours of community service, a boon to both students and the community. By fall of 2014, the College and Career Academy doubled its student population and continues to search for success opportunities for all of Bartow County.

As a new paradigm for education, the College and Career Academy teachers need a fresh perspective, so during the summer of 2014, nineteen Bartow County School System teachers spent a week of their summer working at the Cartersville Medical Center, ZEP, Shaw Industries and Georgia Power. They experienced first-hand how today's business environment is evolving. The Teacher Externship Program is an opportunity for industry leaders and teachers to work together in an effort to bring 'real life' learning to the students in Bartow County schools. Treated like employees, teachers performed on-the-job tasks for the companies, clocked in and out, received 30-minute lunches, and worked in the environment of all other employees. Lessons developed by the participants are implemented in classrooms and shared with peer educators.

Housed at Bartow County College and Career Academy, Bartow Virtual Academy which has seats for twenty-five students. The Virtual Academy allows students to work from home with daily progress reports for parents. The Virtual Academy allows students and parents to find class options best for the individual situation, letting students complete their work while still being a student at their school of origin. This program furthers the BCSS goal to increase the graduation rate and to meet students where they are and help them reach their goals.

Another achievement of Bartow County Schools was the 2012 award of 4.1 million dollars in Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grants. Nine schools as well as the Pre-Kindergarten program use the funds for literacy through technology upgrades, which include laptop computers for students and teachers, and more interactive technology, such as interactive.

BCSS also improved physical facilities by building several new school buildings. In January 2012, the new Cass High School opened, built on a 168-acre property on Cass-White Road in White, GA behind White Elementary. The school replaced two earlier campuses with a history which began nearly five decades earlier, as the first Cass High was established in 1931. Cloverleaf Elementary School opened in the fall of 2012 a new \$13 million, 108,000 square-foot facility with an emphasis on technology. Adairsville Middle School (AMS) opened in the fall of 2013 and boasts that all students are issued electronic textbooks on their laptops. In August of 2014, the 88,000 square-foot Emerson Elementary opened for students. Four hundred forty students enrolled to attend Emerson this school year, but the facility will service 750 students, providing room for expected growth in the area of Bartow County closest to Atlanta and the Lake Point development.

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Bartow County Advanced Placement (AP) students at Woodland High School (WHS) scored 38% higher than the national average on the Environmental Science Test. This equals 82.5% of the students passing the exam. Also, 100% of their students passed in AP Spanish, AP Statistics and AP Studio Art. Adairsville High School (AHS) students exceeded the state averages in Calculus, English/Language Composition, English/Literature Composition, Macroeconomics, Psychology, Spanish and U.S. History. Since 2010, AHS has seen an increase in AP students receiving a three or higher from 45.2% to 71.8% in 2014. Students wishing to take the AP exam at AHS have risen from 84 students to 117 students. They also have seen an increase in the number of AP subject exams given from 103 exams to 207 exams. The middle school CRCT scores reflect a 3% increase in Social Studies.

Adairsville Middle School was able to provide a laptop for every student. Not only did their computer skills increase but student engagement noticeably increased. Teachers placed notes on Blackboard. Utilizing the abundance of technology, student retention improved. Students were able to download documents and refer back to videos when they were absent. The technology is saving time and money on copying assignments.

Cass Middle School's Chorus was one of thirteen choruses to be invited to sing at Carnegie Hall.

Woodland High School has increased their scores in the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). CCRPI is a comprehensive state measure of school improvement and accountability, including the promotion of college and career readiness. From 2012 to 2013, the measure increased over twelve points. While we observe this growth at one of our three high schools, the other two high schools have challenges to increase the CCRPI scores.

Woodland High School has also been recognized by the state for its dedication to excellence. In addition to being named a Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) AP school for the past several years for the number of students taking math and science AP courses, WHS is also pursuing accreditation from the Georgia Department of Education as a STEM certified program in an effort to provide a solid foundation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Woodland's Early Childhood Education, Business, and Graphic Arts programs have received a coveted stamp of excellence.

Woodland High School's Marching Band, always excellent in both musicianship and marching, was named Grand Champions in all three competitions for the 2014-2015 school year. The competitions are White Columns Invitational at Milton High School on October 4, the Blue Ridge Mountain Marching Classic at Fannin County High School on October 11, and the Georgia Invitational Band Competition at Hiram High School on November 14.

The Army JROTC unit at Adairsville High School received a victory in November, 2014 to add to their many awards. Forty of their students made the Raider Team at competition in Molena, Georgia. In addition Emily Sexauer defeated 35 of the best female Raiders in the country to be crowned the Ultimate Raider for the third year in a row, a feat never previously accomplished. Justin Gates, competition director of Sports Network International, has been involved with the national event for 14 years. He said, "Emily is possibly the best female Raider to ever compete. Her accomplishment of being named three-time Ultimate Raider has never been done by anyone, male or female." She believes her accomplishments will help her be successful at West Point.

Students in Bartow County Schools have an opportunity to receive a Microsoft IT Certification through Microsoft's IT Academy. This program is synced with the business curriculum at the local high school. It offers classroom and online learning, hands-on labs, access to hundreds of courses, cutting-edge resources and collaboration tools. Students learn computer basics, computer safety privacy and security, the internet and World Wide Web, Windows 7, and Microsoft 2010. As students finish levels in their business classes, they take on-line tests for the Microsoft Certification. This program is an initiative with the Georgia Department of Education and Microsoft. Bartow County Schools ranks as one of the top five districts in the state with the most students taking and passing the Microsoft Certification.

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In July 2014, Bartow County School System Transportation Department was awarded the Georgia Diesel Emissions Reduction (GaDER) Gold Award by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. The Gold Award is awarded to school systems that have reduced emissions in 26 - 74% of their school bus fleet through: early replacement, installation of emissions control equipment and/or the use of alternative fuels. The GaDER School Bus Program assists Georgia school systems by offering grants, technical assistance and education. This award further shows the commitment our county has made to improve the environment of the communities we serve.

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In past years, Bartow County Schools have had a number of Title I schools recognized as "Distinguished Schools." In 2011, eleven schools held the recognition. Georgia then moved to a "Reward Schools" recognition for 'Highest Performing' and 'Highest Progress.' Taylorsville Elementary has claimed the 'Highest Performing' recognition consecutively for three years. In 2014, Adairsville Elementary was recognized as a "Reward School" for 'Highest Progress.'

Technology implementation in education continues to advance and change and can seem overwhelming at times when trying to keep up with best practices. Bartow County has experienced an influx of new technology to help students and teachers have greater access to resources, content, and differentiation inside and outside the classroom. These resources and the continuing task of preparing our students for their professional careers led to the creation of Instructional Technology Support positions in the Bartow County School System.

The Instructional Technology Support position/s is based on teacher and student support. In a typical month the Instructional Technologist can meet with schools K-12 and provide training for the faculty and staff on the many technologies available. Trainings range from, but are not limited to, use of our Learning Management System (LMS) - Blackboard, Interactive Boards and components, Document Cameras, and Online Resources. During this time, support is also provided in the classroom setting. Resources are provided to meet standards with technology, as well as teaming with the classroom teacher in the classroom setting to model and provide instructions to the students and teacher to use and implement in the future.

There are certainly challenges and areas of improvement for Bartow County. One such challenge is operating with reduced funds while working to implement the increasing number of mandates. Georgia Department of Education is now using the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) for statewide accountability. We are better understanding how this system works but continue to see updates and adjustments. An additional challenge has been the movement from Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). Bartow County has provided professional learning to ensure a clear understanding of the changes.

Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) continues to be an area that is challenging with the additional investment of time that must be allocated for the requirements. Additionally, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) had to be developed and administered to students where there was not a required standardized test (CRCT or EOCT).

Now in addition to the above mandates, the state of Georgia is in the process of developing new assessments - Georgia Milestones EOC and EOG. The new assessments will enable educators to deepen their understanding on students progress from one grade to the next - and just as importantly - identify any gaps in progress so they can address them well before students enter college and the workforce. As we move forward, this will be an area to target for maintaining high student achievement.

In addition, Bartow County continues to address student achievement in all areas. We are specifically looking to improve all of our high school graduation rates, using data to provide intervention to students who are struggling and increasing the number of students who are graduating and moving into college or the work force.

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 Bartow County Schools worked through the process for AdvancED, our strategic plan and school improvement plans were aligned to the five AdvancEd standards. We also ensured that our mission, vision, motto, and beliefs are supported by the work.

Bartow County schools are driven by the mission, vision, and beliefs stated previously. Students in Bartow County are provided with many opportunities to grow and excel academically and socially. Academically, the students in Bartow County have access to programs through gifted education, Advanced Placement, Honors, remedial education, the Early Intervention Program, alternative education, built in remediation and enrichment, English Speakers of Other Languages, CTAE pathways, Special Education, and Title I.

The Bartow Education Foundation, a non-profit organization, was established to provide additional support for the Bartow County School System, its employees, and most important of all, its students.

The Bartow County Education Foundation exists to:

- *Reward innovation in the classroom through teacher grants
- *Reward innovation in the schools through employee grants
- *Recognize exemplary performance in system employees through the Teacher of the Year program and the Employee of the Month Recognition program
- *Build community and business relationships
- *Seek support and resources essential to the success of public education
- *Provide professional development opportunities for the Bartow County School System

The mission statement of the Bartow County Education Foundation is to support the Bartow County School System in providing world-class educational opportunities for its students and teaching community