

Marietta City School District

Strategic Improvement Planning Report

December 3, 2009



GSBA



**Marietta City School District
2009 Strategic Planning Report – 12/3/09**

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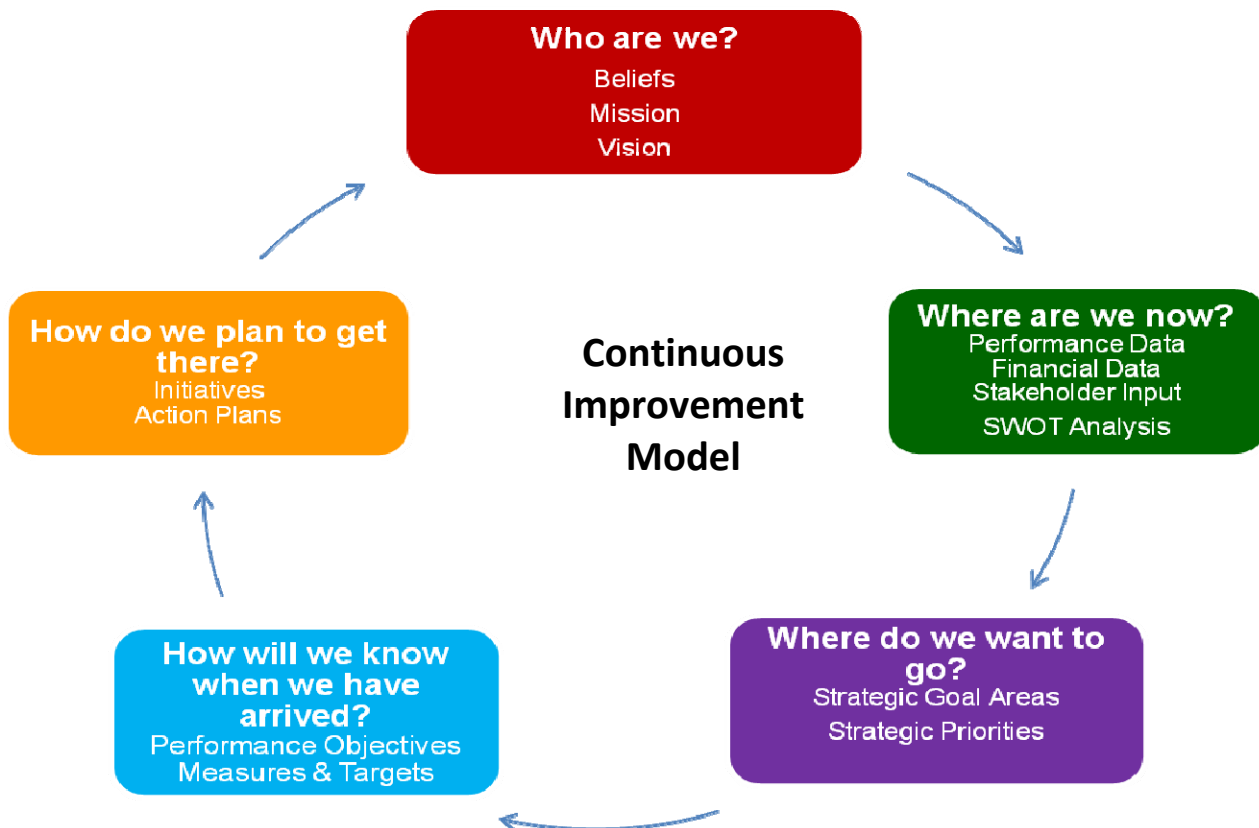
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Strategic Improvement Planning Executive Summary

The Board of Education of the City of Marietta voted to use a process developed by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) to develop an updated strategic improvement plan for the school district. This comprehensive process engaged the community and all stakeholder groups to create universal ownership and support for district and school improvement. Highlights of the process include:

- A comprehensive community engagement component to allow stakeholders to have a voice in the strategic improvement planning process
- A diverse planning team that represented stakeholder groups to develop the plan
- A facilitated planning process that assisted the planning and action teams in analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the school district and developing/defining the mission, vision, beliefs, goal areas and elements of the strategic improvement plan
- A facilitated process to work with experts within the district and community on developing initiatives and action steps to implement the plan



The strategic improvement planning process follows a continuous improvement cycle designed around the five questions listed in the visual above. This process begins with a community engagement session and survey of stakeholders. The entire process may take 8-10 months to complete and is divided into the following phases.

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Phase I

Community Engagement: In August 2009 the strategic improvement planning process began with a community engagement session, involving representatives from all stakeholder groups and a stakeholder survey to gather vital input from the community.

Planning Team: In September 2009 a group of 32 people representing stakeholder groups from the school board, central office, schools, parents, students, business and other community representatives were assembled to answer the questions: “Who are we”, “Where are we now”, and “Where do we want to go”. Specific outcomes include a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, developing beliefs, mission and vision for the district, and developing strategic goal areas and priorities for the strategic improvement plan.

Action Teams: In October 2009 four smaller teams totaling 28 people were assembled to answer the question “How will we know when we have arrived”. The action teams looked at each proposed strategic goal area and identified the performance objectives, measures and targets to answer this question. Additionally, the action teams began to look at the initiatives and action steps that might be needed to answer the fourth question of the GSBA Strategic Improvement Planning Process, “How do we plan to get there”.

Action Team Report to Planning Team: In November, 2009 the Action Teams delivered a report of their work back to the Planning Team. The planning team reviewed the action team’s work, discussed priorities, implications and made recommendations for additions or changes that might be needed.

Phase II

GSBA/GLISI Report to the Board of Education: In December 2009 representatives from GSBA/GLISI will present a report of the strategic improvement plan to the board. The board will review the report, offer input and consider approval of the plan for 2010 – 2012.

Board and Staff: Once the board has adopted the work of the Planning and Action Teams, specific initiatives, and action steps necessary to execute the plan will be investigated and/or implemented as necessary. These initiatives will be investigated and/or implemented at the board, district, school (School Improvement Plans) and community levels.

Phase III

Alignment: The plan initiatives and action steps will be aligned to the districts and school budgets, as well as board, superintendent and leader evaluations. Additionally, school improvement plans and other system action plans will be aligned with the new strategic improvement plan.

Phase IV

Execution, Monitoring and Reporting: After alignment of the plan, district and school staff in conjunction with the board will execute, monitor, and report on the plan as well as ensure an ongoing process to review and update the plan as needed.

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Marietta City Schools' Commitment to Ongoing Process: Action Team performance measures and suggested initiatives/action steps have been documented for follow-up. These suggested initiatives/action steps are not inclusive of school-based initiatives that may be developed to support and meet specific established goals. In keeping with the school district's Charter System status there will be continued focus on systemic processes and goals to improve the district, but differentiated models are encouraged at the local school levels. Where needed, a task force will be created to further explore suggested system level strategies and initiatives. School-based governance and leadership teams are in place to foster the development of appropriate action items in support of school-based initiatives to support and meet specific established goals, performance measures and strategic priorities.

Strategic plan mid-year and summary updates will be provided to the Board by Action Team Leaders beginning in March 2010 and August 2010. The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction will review the school-based status of the strategic goals through the principal evaluation process currently in place. The e-Docs Strategic Plan software provides a Balanced Scorecard that reflects the Strategic Plan goals and progress.

eBOARD Strategic Plan Software: One of the most important aspects of the Strategic Improvement Planning Process is the ability of the school district to use GSBA's eBOARD Strategic Plan Software to assist with the execution, monitoring, and reporting of the plan. GSBA's eBOARD Strategic Plan Module makes the process easy for district staff and the school board. Plan items can be easily updated by staff allowing users to filter the plan by staff, department, status, priority, date, etc. As the plan is updated, results are reported on through the Strategic Dashboard, Balanced Scorecard and Goal Alignment report. eBOARD helps to keep everyone informed and provides real-time status updates of the plan in a transparent fashion.

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Proposed Mission, Vision & Beliefs

Mission

The mission of Marietta City Schools is to prepare each of our students through academic achievement for life success.

Vision

The vision of Marietta City Schools is to be the school system of choice for families.

Beliefs

- We believe a safe, secure and supportive environment is essential for success.
- We believe students deserve a rigorous, relevant and engaging learning experience.
- We believe each student has an inherent self worth and the right to reach his/her potential.
- We believe community and parental involvement is key to success.
- We believe leadership matters.
- We believe diversity is strength.
- We believe our district is tradition-rich and future-focused.

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Proposed Strategic Goal Areas and Performance Objectives

Goal Area I – Student Achievement

- Increase student mastery of curriculum
- Increase high school graduation rate
- Ensure systemic instructional & assessment practices
- Increase number of students who exceed standards

Goal Area II – Safe & Supportive Learning Environment

- Improve systemic utilization of resources
- Promote proactive practices that support students and staff
- Enhance organization processes

Goal Area III – Communication & Engagement

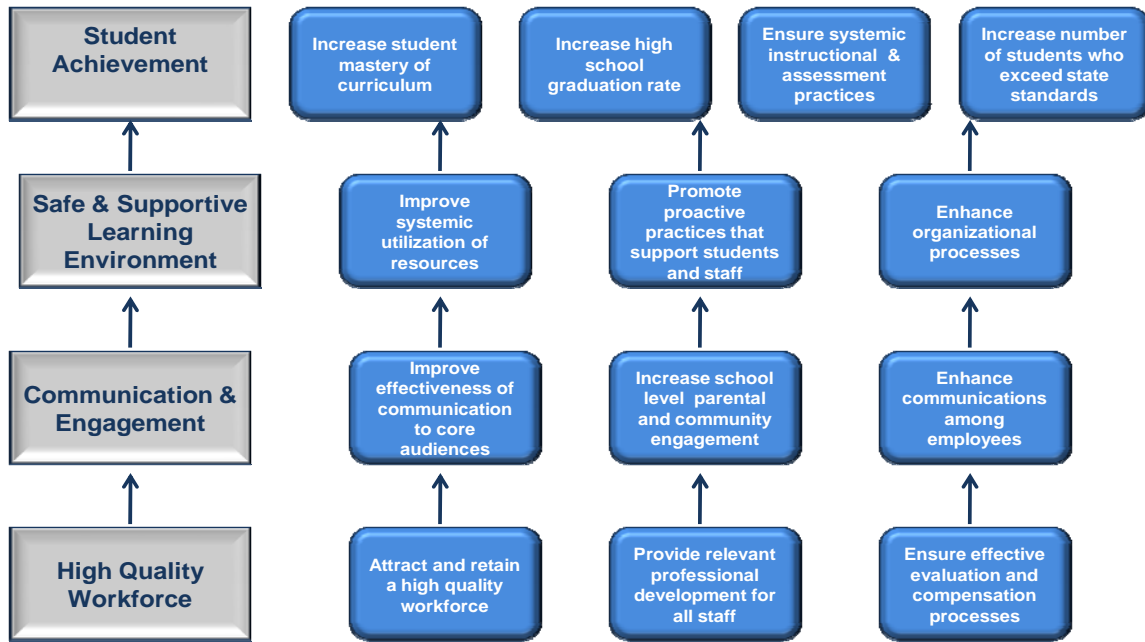
- Improve effectiveness of communication to core audiences
- Increase school-level parental and community engagement
- Enhance communications among employees (district and school level)

Goal Area IV – High Quality Workforce

- Sustain a quality workforce
- Provide relevant professional development for all staff
- Ensure effective evaluation and compensation processes

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Marietta City Schools Strategy Map



Marietta City Schools Strategy Statement

Strategic Goal Area	Cause & Affect Statement
Student Achievement	Then our graduation rate will improve, our performance gaps will decrease, and <i>all</i> students will meet high expectations.
Safe & Supportive Learning Environment	↑ Ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for students and staff,
Communication & Engagement	↑ Improve the effectiveness of school-to-home and district communications, and increase parental engagement, and
High Quality Workforce	↑ If we build a high quality workforce, and

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Proposed Strategic Improvement Plan Detail

Strategic Goal Area – Student Achievement	
Goal Area Priorities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction ❖ Graduation Rate ❖ Attendance Rate 	
Performance Objective A – Increase student mastery of curriculum	
Performance Measures:	Target:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % meeting standard on CRCT (grades 1-8) • % meeting expectations on GHSGT and GHSWT 1st administration • % meeting expectations of ACT • % meeting SAT expectations • % meeting EOCT expectations • Percentile rank on ITBS (grades 2, 4, 7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3% increase • 3% increase • 1% increase • 3% increase in composite score • 3% increase in composite score • 3% over baseline (FY11, grades 2, 4, 7)
Possible Initiatives:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interventions initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Connections Previewing models ➢ Summer School ➢ Inter-sessions offered during identified breaks in calendar ➢ Support courses ➢ Explore and implement a reliable, valid, universal screening tool 2. AP/IB Initiative for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Increased enrollment in high level classes (AP/IB courses for middle level performing students) ➢ SAT Prep classes 3. ITBS pre-post test initiative 4. ITBS performance of continuously enrolled students initiative 	
Performance Objective B – Increase high school graduation rate	
Performance Measures:	Target:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of students involved in a collaborative career academy • % of students using virtual learning platform for initial credit • # of students using virtual learning platform • % of subgroups showing improvement in Math & ELA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% increase of dual-enrolled students • 3% increase • Baseline (Yr1) • 3% increase
Possible Initiatives:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dual Enrollment Initiative 2. Blended learning delivery model initiative 3. On-time Graduation initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Middle School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acceleration Academies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Saturday Writing Camp ▪ After School ○ Spring semester ○ Math Camp 	

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- High School
 - Acceleration Academies
 - After school
 - Saturday school
 - Inter-sessions
 - GHSGT Prep
 - SAT Prep
 - Targeted Intervention Classes
 - Trailer classes
 - Support classes
 - Previewing classes
 - Inclusion classes

Performance Objective C – Develop, Implement, and Refine Systemic Instructional Practices and Assessment procedures

Performance Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes/No – Define standards based instructional expectations by May 2010 • Yes/No - Establish cyclical standards based professional learning 	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Yes
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- Possible Initiatives:**
1. Standards Based instructional initiative
 - Educate all teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators
 - Model classroom second life
 - Align with state – create visual for teachers
 - Online learning modules
 - Consistent standards based classroom rubric
 2. Response to intervention (RTI) initiative
 - Examine identification and implementation of systemic progress monitoring tool
 3. Assessment initiative
 - Content Common Formative Assessments and benchmarks
 - Common unit designs
 - Grade level & department common assignments
 4. Continuous professional learning initiative
 - System level redelivery
 - GA DOE tools
 - Online courses
 - Training videos
 - Digital evaluation tools
 - E-portfolios
 - Posting protocols

Performance Objective D – Increase number of students who exceed state standards

Performance Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of students exceeding standards on CRCT • % of students exceeding expectations on Georgia Writing Assessment (grades 5 , 8 & 11) • # of mid-level performing students enrolled in IB or AP classes • % of AP students who score 3 or higher 	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3% increase • 3% increase • 3% increase • 3% increase
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• % of IB students who score 4 or higher	• 3% increase
Possible Initiatives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Differentiated Instruction Initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Acceleration Academics ➤ Saturday Writing Camp ➤ Middle Years Program ➤ PSAT identification profile identify mid-level performers ➤ Parent education ➤ Identify CRCT mid-level performance 2. Blended learning delivery model initiative 3. AP/IB/SAT Initiative 	
Performance Objective E– Increase Attendance Rate	
Performance Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ % of students absent 15 days or more 	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2% decrease
Possible Initiatives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-examine Attendance Protocols Initiative 	

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Strategic Goal Area – Safe & Supportive Learning Environment

Goal Area Priorities:

- ❖ Student Safety
- ❖ Student Support

Performance Objective A – Improve systematic utilization of resources to enhance safety and security of schools and support structures

Performance Measures:

- % of schools equipped with web-based digital surveillance systems
- % of facilities equipped with keyless entry systems
- % of schools using ID technology to control visitor and student access
- % of buses equipped with GPS devices
- % of schools using e-discipline referral system

Target:

- 100%
- 100%
- 100%
- 100%
- 100%

Possible Initiatives:

1. Web-based digital surveillance camera initiative
 - Review and determine system operational requirements
 - Identify sources of funding, including grants
 - Establish system installation priority
 - Installation of system(s)
 - Ensure training of staff in use of system
2. Keyless entry system initiative
 - Review and determine system operational requirements
 - Identify sources of funding, including grants
 - Establish system installation priority
 - Installation of system(s)
 - Ensure training of staff in use of system
3. ID technology initiative – to control visitor and student access to facilities and resources
 - Review and determine system operational requirements
 - Identify sources of funding, including grants
 - Establish system installation priority
 - Installation of system(s)
 - Ensure training of staff in use of system
4. Transportation safety initiative – use of GPS technology to improve student safety and transportation efficiency
 - Explore using existing GPS on board hardware from defunct Bus Radio programming
 - Acquire routing software that will work in conjunction with GPS technology in improve safety and efficiency of route management
 - Explore possibility of funding GPS technology and route management software from costs savings generated from decreased transportation operating cost
5. Electronic e-discipline referral initiative
 - Review performance data including middle school pilot
 - Review technical performance of pilot system
 - Identify sources of funding, including grants
 - Establish system installation priority
 - Installation of system
 - Ensure training of staff in use of system
 - Integrate the bus referral system w/electronic discipline referral system

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Performance Objective B – Promote proactive practices that support student and staff	
Performance Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of students participating in non-traditional educational opportunities • Yes/No - Enhance Marietta Intervention Project (MIP) interventions by May 2011 • Yes/No – Expand the Bus Safety Partnership to grades K-5 by May 2011 • % of schools implementing social skills training by May 2011 • Reduction in the disproportionality ratios for students served through special education 	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% increase • Yes • Yes • 100% • .2 reduction
Possible Initiatives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Non-traditional educational opportunities initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Review current level of participation in non-traditional educational activities ➢ Conduct needs assessment ➢ Conduct cost/benefits analysis of projected programming ➢ Implement programs as required 2. MIP initiative – expand MIP to include behavior/social skills interventions in all schools (pk-3 focus) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Enhance parent participation in MIP ➢ Use stimulus funds to pilot the addition of a behavior interventionist to existing MIP framework ➢ Increase parental communication and participation in early intervention 3. Bus Safety Partnership initiative – expand BSP to grades k-5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Collect data to assess current P-12 BSP performance ➢ Submit recommendation to Superintendent and Board ➢ If approved, implement BSP grades k-5 during winter semester ➢ Conduct annual evaluation of effectiveness 4. Social Skills initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Survey systems to determine how they are implementing social skills programs ➢ Train school personnel to implement program(s) ➢ Pilot social skills program through community liaison ➢ Pilot social skills program through MIP interventionist ➢ Pilot social skills program for students at risk of dropping out of school 5. Disproportionality initiative –reduction in the risk ratio for students disproportionately served in special education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Review transfer folders for eligibility to ensure most appropriate placement ➢ Improve home school communication ➢ Increase opportunities for parents to participate in school and community activities 	
Performance Objective C – Enhance organizational disciplinary processes	
Performance Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of repeat offender disciplinary referrals • # of school and bus discipline referrals 	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% • 25%
Possible Initiatives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. System Discipline initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Review current level of repeat offenders to establish baseline ➢ Implement tracking system ➢ Implement strategies to reduce number of repeat offenders ➢ Reduction in number of school and bus discipline referrals 	

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Strategic Goal Area – Communication & Engagement	
Goal Area Priorities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Build Awareness and Enhance Understanding ❖ Strengthen Internal Communications ❖ Create Collaboration – Engage Community 	
Performance Objective A – Improve effectiveness of communication to core audiences	
Performance Measures:	Target:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. # of new subscribers to e-communications 2. # of unique listeners 3. % of respondents 4. # of podcasts/webcasts 5. % of parent/community respondents satisfied with MCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 new subscribers per school year • 25/event • Range 5-10% • 2 per semester • Baseline (Yr1)
Possible Initiatives:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. External communications initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Explore text messaging for alert notifications ➢ Explore use of social media tools to engage parents/community (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) ➢ Develop topic specific podcasts/webcasts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review survey results to evaluate effectiveness 2. Engagement improvement initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Develop annual parent survey (first quarter 2010) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parent survey ○ Review survey results/recommend additional action steps 	
Performance Objective B – Increase school-level parental and community engagement	
Performance Measures:	Target:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of parent/community attendees/per school • # of realtor/community tours per school • # community/PIE visits per school • # of Parent/Community Attendees/per school • # of Parent attendees/per school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline (Yr1) • 2 per school year • 2 per school year • Baseline (Yr1) • Baseline (Yr1)
Possible Initiatives:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent/Community Engagement initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Create newsletter, ads, fliers templates for school-to-home communication ➢ Explore MCS Ambassadors Academy ➢ Realtor/Community Tours ➢ Community/PIE visits ➢ Alternate years Partners in Education/Community Resources Expo ➢ Annual Family Engagement Summit 	
Performance Objective C – Enhance communications among employees (district and school level)	
Performance Measures:	Target:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of employee survey respondents • # of listeners/viewers for system podcasts, webcasts and other electronic mediums • % of satisfied employee respondents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range 5-10% • Baseline (Yr1) • Baseline (Yr1)

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Possible Initiatives:

1. Internal Communication initiative
 - Quarterly employee newsletter
 - Directors/CO attend minimum of 2 school staff meetings/year with Superintendent
 - Superintendent/roundtable meetings with school-level administrators
 - Develop topic specific webcasts, podcasts
 - Review survey results to evaluate effectiveness
2. Engagement Improvement Initiative
 - Teacher Quality Project Survey (previously QLTE) - Jan 2010 - Towler
 - Develop annual multi-area employee survey – 1Q 2010 (send out 2Q) - Towler
 - Review survey results/recommend additional action steps

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Strategic Goal Area – High Quality Workforce	
Goal Area Priorities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Staff Attraction and Retention ❖ Quality Professional Learning ❖ Leader & Teacher Evaluation 	
Performance Objective A – Attract and retain a high quality workforce	
Performance Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher retention % (3+ years) • % satisfied as measured by Teacher Quality Project Survey (previously known as QLTE survey) • % of highly qualified teachers/paraprofessionals • Yes/No Compensation package one of top five in state annually • # Staff recognition opportunities • Yes/No Signing/Retention bonus in critical needs areas (secondary math and science) 	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3% increase • % satisfied TBD on QLT • 100% • Yes • 1 new opportunity per year • Yes
Possible Initiatives:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher retention initiative (use the results of Teacher Quality Project Survey to implement strategies to increase teacher satisfaction) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Study survey results ➢ Develop action plan ➢ Implement action plan ➢ Evaluate action plan ➢ Recruit and hire highly qualified staff ➢ Schedule teachers in positions in which they are considered highly qualified 2. Staff recognition initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Compile a list of all recognition opportunities ➢ Establish recognition taskforce 3. Annual Compensation Review initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Annual review of compensation packages ➢ Continuation of signing/retention bonuses ➢ Paid mentors to highly qualified and fully certified teachers for teaching critical area secondary mathematics and science courses 	
Performance Objective B – Provide relevant professional development for all staff	
Performance Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of new endorsements for critical need subject areas (Math, Reading, G/T, ESOL) • Yes/No Development of comprehensive professional development tracking system by May 2011 	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% increase • Yes
Possible Initiatives:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critical Needs subject endorsement initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Provide cohorts and funding support 2. Professional Learning initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Scope/Sequence /Matrix – District/School/Personal (Tiers) ➢ Establish tiered expectations ➢ Tracking system of completed professional development ➢ Transparent protocols 	

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Performance Objective C – Ensure effective evaluation and compensation processes	
Performance Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish evaluation and merit pay taskforce by May 2010	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes
Possible Initiatives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Evaluation and Merit Pay taskforce initiative<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Investigate issues➤ Create taskforce➤ Study other systems utilizing merit pay and use of evaluation processes2. Merit Pay model initiative<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Develop model to capture potential federal/state funding initiatives to support targeted implementation.	

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Appendix

Planning Team Members

Thomas Algarin
Gabe Carmona
Mike Cochran
Sheila Colquitt
Carrie Curnutt
Dr. Darlene Darby
Tony Figueras
Elise Goldstein
Stephanie Grogan
Salleigh Grubbs
Paul Hall
Dr. Devonne Harper
Marquette Haynes
Preston Howard
Dayton Hibbs
Corey Lawson
Brad Leskoven
Dr. Emily Lembeck
Amber Mathis
Chuck McCampbell
Jill Mutimer
Dr. Debra Pickett
Tiffany Pollock
Dr. Donna Ryan
Brian Binzer
Anita Vannice
Louis Walker
John Waller
Randy Weiner
Ileanette (Lea) Wilson
Likeam Wise
Kathie Wood

Action Team Members

Student Achievement

Leigh Colburn
Kate Huntley
Dr. Tim Jones
Dr. Debra Pickett
Dr. Margaret Sims
Mary Thurman
Anita Vannice

Safe & Supportive Learning Environment

Jana Chesney
Mike Cochran
Preston Howard
Jennifer Lawson
Dr. Donna Ryan
Dr. Andre Touchard

Communication & Engagement

Thomas Algarin
Matthew Daily
Charlene Dougal
Elise Goldstein
Diana Mills
Kristen Saxon
Dr. Karen Smits
Dan Vargas

High Quality Work Force

Lisa Cox
Julie King
Judith Gann
Dayton Hibbs
Kara Johnson
Beth Nugent
Sarah Towler

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Community Engagement Report

Community Forum – August 25, 2009

Online Survey – August 25-September 9, 2009

To assist the Strategic Planning Team with their work, the Marietta City Schools (MCS) engaged its community in a process to gauge the thoughts, feelings and perceptions that stakeholders hold regarding the district. The engagement initiative was two-fold. The first was a community forum and the second was an online survey.

Another important consideration of this initiative was to honor the community survey that was done earlier in the year. To do that, the choices listed under the questions on this survey are related to those in the earlier survey. This allows the district to get another look at where community members are in regards to these issues. (Please see the attached survey instruments for details.)

Participants at the community forum and of the online survey responded to the following questions:

- 1) What do you feel proud of when you think about Marietta City Schools?
- 2) What do you think are the top issues facing students today? These may be community, family and/or socio-economic issues that are not necessarily the responsibility of the school district.
- 3) As a community, what do we want our public schools/school district to provide for our students? What would success look like for our schools?
- 4) What do you think are the top challenges faced by Marietta City Schools?

The intention of this report is to provide a collection of the best thinking of school and community members regarding the four questions presented. This is a qualitative survey. The data and anecdotal information from the community forum and the online survey are included in this report.

The Format

Community Forum

During the months of July and August, the district held two meetings for central office staff and school governance teams to explain the process and ask for assistance in recruiting participants to attend the community forum. At the community forum, held on August 25 at the Marietta City Middle School, participants heard a presentation on state and local educational issues and school district achievement data and then they worked in small discussion groups. Volunteer facilitators agreed to help keep each group focused, make sure every person had an opportunity to be heard, and ensure that what was said was properly recorded. Childcare was provided, as well as translators for Spanish speaking residents.

Online Survey

An online survey using the same questions offered additional input opportunities. If they desired to do so, participants could provide additional comments on all questions and on the survey as a whole. A Spanish version was provided.

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The Response

Nearly 50 community members, teachers and students participated in the community forum. Including residents who filled out the Spanish version of the online survey, there were 330 full responses to the online survey. Respondents overwhelmingly identified themselves as parents. The next two groups with the largest numbers of participants were students and teachers. There were only four responses to the Spanish version of the survey.

Reasons to be Proud and Assets to Build Upon

When asked, “What do you feel proud of when you think of Marietta City Schools?” participants of the community meeting and the online survey are in general agreement on a few key points:

- 1) Academic and special programs – participants voiced pride in a number of Marietta City’s programs, including the academic and athletic programs. Participants often cited the magnet school and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs.
- 2) Student Achievement – although participants voiced the need to improve certain aspects of this area, they also reported great pride in what Marietta City students have achieved.
- 3) Human resources – participants of the community meeting and the online survey cite pride in the staff and administration and students of Marietta City Schools. Participants at the community forum also expressed pride in the fiscal responsibility the district has shown.
- 4) Facilities – participants of both engagement activities cited great pride in the facilities within the school district. Participants praised the high school numerous times.

Online Survey Results – Survey participants chose their top three areas of pride. The areas selected as a first, second or third choice most often were:

- 1) Marietta City’s Academic Programs – 271 responses (Also most often cited as top source of pride.)
- 2) Achievement of MCS Students – 217 responses
- 3) MCS Staff – 193 responses

What Issues Are Students Facing

Several themes emerged from the small group work at the community forum. The following captures the work of the groups when asked what they felt were the top issues facing students today, regardless of whether the school district is responsible for addressing them or not:

- Technology presents opportunities as well as threats – participants said students possess great skill in this area, but had concerns that technology has eroded the social development of students in some ways. Participants cited the digital divide among the young and old as well.
- Economic issues dominated in a number of ways. Participants discussed increased competition, the need for higher levels of skill and knowledge, and the uncertainty that students must grapple with. A separate, but related issue is that our rapidly changing world magnifies feelings of uncertainty. This could include changing expectations, standards and curriculum, too.

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- Students today face peer pressure like all generations have, but changing technology and its increased use as a means of personal communication may leave some feeling isolated and without proper social skills. Because of technology, students today don't need to be personally involved in activities to get the scoop on what's happening.

Participants of the online survey also indicated what they think are the top three issues facing students today. The survey included a list of choices with an opportunity to add to or delete from the list. Below are the issues in descending order from highest to lowest numbers of first, second and third choice mentions on the online survey:

- 1) Being ready for college or the workplace (196 responses)
- 2) Lack of parental involvement (183 responses)
- 3) Drugs and alcohol (139 responses)
- 4) Negative peer pressure (138 responses)
- 5) A changing economy; fewer high-paying jobs (133 responses)
- 6) Higher levels of education being required to find work (113 responses)
- 7) Low mathematics and science proficiency (110 responses)
- 8) Rapidly changing world; technology is outpacing skills (110 responses)

Community Expectations of the Schools/District

The question asked was, "As a community, what do we want our public schools/school district to provide for our students? What would success look like for our schools?" Participants at the community forum brainstormed ideas and several themes emerged:

- Arts programs – There is great interest in ensuring support for arts programs. The need for an auditorium at the high school came up several times.
- Student placement – There seemed to be concern about how special education and regular education students are grouped for instruction.
 - Open communication – While some participants said they would like more open communication with the district, many thanked the district for providing the opportunity to provide input into the strategic planning process.
 - Programs to assist students in succeeding – Participants voiced the desire to continue offering meaningful academic programs for all students with an eye toward ensuring equity in all programs for all kinds of students. Participants mentioned extracurricular programs and activities numerous times as well.

Those responding to the online survey chose up to five of the following statements, in order of highest response to the lowest:

- 1) Highly qualified staff/teachers (244 responses)
- 2) A safe and orderly environment (233 responses)
- 3) Technology in the classrooms (189 responses)
- 4) Curriculum that prepares students for the workplace – as a minimum standard (167 responses)
- 5) More rigorous and challenging programs (154 responses)

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- 6) Excellent extracurricular programs (152 responses)
- 7) School choice/alternative learning programs (103 responses)

Top Challenges Faced by School District

When asked what are the top issues facing the Marietta City School District, there was much variety in comments between the community meeting and the online survey.

Participants at the community forum consistently mentioned the following issues:

- Funding – comments included lowering taxes to attract business and, therefore, generating additional local revenue; and the possibility of not being able to fund popular programs
- Communications – this included engaging all segments of the community and communications between administrators and parents
- Student achievement – participants said that reaching the middle learners is important as well as the students who don't attend the magnet school
- Economy

Online survey participants were asked to choose their top three out of a list provided. (If their choice wasn't on the list, they were invited to add it in an open comments section.) The following is a list in descending order of those chosen as a first, second or third choice most often to those chosen the least often:

- 1) Increasing student achievement (220 responses)
- 2) School funding issues (206 responses)
- 3) Recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff (163 responses)
- 4) Expanding communication and community involvement (150 responses)
- 5) Providing challenging instructional programs (149 responses)
- 6) Providing a safe, orderly environment (134 responses)

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Planning Team Stakeholder Wants and Expectations Summary

During the planning team session participants were asked to summarize the wants and expectations of the students, internal and external stakeholders of Marietta City Schools based on the focus group and survey results?

Students	<p><u>Wants and Expectations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. safe and supportive environment (equity respect) 2. challenge & engagement 3. ready for future (technology, careers) 4. hands on learning 5. variety of extracurricular activities 6. variety of career specific instruction 7. arts and extracurricular opportunities 8. choices for college prep 9. technology integration – access to technology 10. desire a community/be involved 11. digital world 12. engaged in their classes, clubs, community 13. fun learning 14. positive learning environment 15. Interactive style learning environment (collaborative, real life appl.) 16. energetic, enthusiastic, motivating staff 17. tools to be successful (critical skills) 18. basic needs (personal, school, consistency) <p>fairness – respect consideration</p>
Internal Stakeholders	<p><u>Wants and Expectations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. supportive and safe environment 2. sufficient resources (time, money, materials) 3. opportunities for growth (technology, professional learning) 4. more transparency and input on decisions 5. need for training and professional development 6. more parental involvement/input 7. voice – legitimate 8. respect for craft/expertise 9. autonomy treated as a professional 10. time used wisely 11. appreciation/acknowledgment 12. support in the classroom, behavior, future expectations, furthering education 13. voice to be understood 14. ability to grow professionally 15. clear communication 16. team players

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. confidence in leadership /organizational structure (support system) 18. training/support from administration 19. recognition (supervisory & peer level) 20. fair competitive wages/performance incentives
External Stakeholders	<p><u>Wants and Expectations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. highly qualified staff 2. safe, orderly environment 3. ready for future 4. positive public recognition 5. trust 6. distraction free learning environment 7. want MCS to be an excellent school system 8. input 9. access 10. continuous, ongoing improvement for their child 11. best teachers 12. arts 13. more marketing for MCS 14. meet individual student needs (differentiation) 15. parents encouraged to be involved 16. communication and access to opportunity 17. work force development 18. highly qualified well prepared workforce 19. leadership involvement in community 20. increase level of trust (principals, staff, etc) <p>competitive test scores</p>

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Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. data driven instruction (accurate grading) 2. staff with a common focus (student achievement) 3. positive AYP results 4. diversity 5. tradition (personnel, achievement) 6. variety of programs/pathways 7. size* 8. opportunity for articulation 9. people 10. structure (one high school) magnet, IB 11. diversity 12. choice academies 13. multi-cultural activities 14. tradition of excellence 15. challenging programs 16. culture of commitment among staff 17. proactive approach vs. reactive (ESOL) 18. improved student achievement – graduation rate increase 19. test scores 20. excellent location 21. quality of life 22. relationship with city government 23. charter system 24. strong tax base 25. alumni support 26. positive media relationship 27. business and political leaders local/country) 28. pride of community 29. choice/size 30. mentoring (new employees, department, teams) 31. programs for high achievers 32. interventions for struggling students 33. PLC credit recovery – alternative programs 34. Admin/staff 35. community support 36. technology – variety 37. recent accomplishments 38. leadership opportunities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. high student transiency 2. school-to-home communications 3. Immature info tech org. 4. student access to IT 5. the way we’ve always done it 6. size 7. transition between levels 8. technology (\$, manage) 9. evaluation process 10. compensation 11. choice (if not grown properly) 12. lack of parent involvement 13. funding (state/federal) 14. digital divide (have/have not) 15. size of school system 16. time 17. limited bandwidth 18. limited digital resources in some schools 19. attendance 20. parental involvement 21. cultural awareness 22. not knowing how to engage all populations 23. serving the average learners – challenge for all, college prep for not IB 24. identification of gifted kids from diverse backgrounds 25. taking students to exceeds 26. perception of middle years program 27. lack of emphasis on arts 28. divided commitment to MYP 29. divided commitment to choice – staff

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Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. alumni involvement 2. partners in education 3. ARRA funding (short term) 4. SGT input 5. professional learning for teachers 6. leadership development 7. one BOE to one local government 8. academic/behavior interventions 9. partnerships 10. Technology – no texts? Engage students 11. charter flexibility 12. choice 13. size of school system 14. lack of technology access 15. increase family involvement 16. access to county service 17. community involvement 18. cross school activities 19. redevelopment 20. community forums 21. integration of technology 22. professional learning 23. growth of arts programs 24. charter system – maximize opportunity 25. CTAE expansion 26. community support for all schools 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. economy 2. peer pressure (gang membership, bullying, cliques) 3. renter to owner ratios 4. ARRA funding 5. paperwork requirements (reporting) 6. stalled redevelopment 7. the way we've always done it 8. language/communication barriers 9. inaccurate perceptions 10. economic downturn 11. technology safety 12. legislation* 13. negative perception of public education 14. lack of funding for instructional tech (SPLOST) 15. population shifts 16. loss of young families 17. leadership change 18. real estate market 19. declining enrollment 20. barriers to community involvement 21. lack of diversity among parent involvement 22. appropriate use of technology 23. social ills 24. time